

*TOWARDS AN EFFECTIVE  
MORAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA*

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
by Izuchukwu Marcel Onyeocha  
to the Institute of Education  
University of London  
1990

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## Acknowledgements

My sincere thanks go to the Claretian Communities in Nigeria, and in Hayes Middlesex England for all their support and solidarity. Special thanks go to the Reverends Christian Ihedoro, Michael Fewell, Jim Fischer. Special thanks go to Mr Graham Haydon who painstakingly guided me through this thesis and patiently bore my frequent lack of insight. Dr Roy Gardner's gentle and friendly disposition was so soothing in the midst of pressure. Special thanks also go to the following who in various ways helped me at the various stages of this thesis: The Reverends Jim Flynn, Richard Albarano, David Bava, Anthony Njoku, Donatus Nwachukwu. Others include Messers Anselm Nwaorgu and Cyril Ibe, Miss Sharon King and Miss Carol Breckenridge. Frau Edeltraüd Ketzold provided the money for the purchase of the PC with which the entire work was prepared. All my friends kept encouraging me while I worked. May God bless them all.

Izu Marcel Onyeocha.

## Abstract

Nigeria is faced with the problems and challenges of pluralism in respect of its ethnic, social, political and religious diversity. This thesis argues that in order to reconcile the conflicting interests and tendencies in the country, an integrated approach to moral education is required.

The first chapter clarifies the current situation in Nigeria by showing historically the roots of the present diversity. The second chapter is an introduction to some concepts -- of morality, education, moral education and moral development -- which are essential to the later discussion.

The third chapter describes and analyses approaches to moral education in traditional Nigerian society, including both content and methods. The fourth chapter is premised on the argument that moral education for national cohesion in Nigeria needs to take account of features of Nigerian society which, while being aspects of the problem, also contain the resources through which a solution can be approached. More is said on the current diversity, including its political and religious aspects, and it is pointed out that both Nigeria's political ideals, as enshrined in its constitution, and the predominantly religious orientation of its people, are resources on which moral education can build.

The fifth chapter asks how far theoretical approaches developed in the West can be adapted to Nigeria's situation. Consideration is given to major political, especially democratic, theories; to ethical theories, especially where they focus on virtue; to conceptions of the nature of religion; and to psychological developmental theories. In each case it is argued that there are valuable features in such theories but they cannot be transferred wholesale to the Nigerian situation.

The sixth chapter, accordingly, seeks to show how a distinctively Nigerian approach might be developed. This will allow for the possibility of a non-Western form of democracy; for a form of moral education which incorporates what is most valuable in traditional Nigerian practices; and for a religious education which takes account of common factors within a situation of diversity.

Finally, an attempt is made in the seventh chapter to sketch a model of an effective and integrated moral education for Nigeria, in terms of the role of the school; the qualities required on the part of the teacher; the qualities of the student; the content of what is taught; and the methods to be used.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements . . . . .	ii
Abstract . . . . .	iii
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
CHAPTER ONE	
NIGERIA: AN OVERVIEW . . . . .	3
1. Sources of Information: . . . . .	3
2. The Peoples of Nigeria: Diversity of Origins . . . . .	4
3. European Contacts: . . . . .	6
4. Colonial Administration: . . . . .	7
5. Christianity and Missionaries: . . . . .	10
6. Missionaries and Beginnings of Western Education: . . . . .	11
7. Contact With Islam: . . . . .	14
8. Rivalry: Pluralism's Occupational Hazard . . . . .	16
9. Nigeria in Crisis . . . . .	19
10. Nigeria's Present Predicament: . . . . .	22
CHAPTER TWO	
THE CONCEPT OF MORALITY AND MORAL EDUCATION . . . . .	33
1. Morality and Ethics . . . . .	33
2. The Concept of Education . . . . .	35
3. Morality and Education. . . . .	37
4. Content of Moral Education: . . . . .	38
5. Approaches to Moral Education: . . . . .	41
a. The Transmissory Approach . . . . .	41
b. The Ethics of Principles . . . . .	42
c. A Mixture of Both . . . . .	43
6. Nature of Moral Development. . . . .	43
7. Moral Development and Conscience . . . . .	45
8. Moral Education in Nigeria . . . . .	46

### CHAPTER THREE

CONTENT OF TRADITIONAL MORAL EDUCATION	51
1. Traditional Nigerian Moral "Code"	52
2. Sexual Morality in Traditional Nigerian Society	59
3. Traditional Moral Education of the Young	62
3 <sub>1</sub> . Male Initiation	63
a. Explanations For Lads 12-14 at Initiation	63
b. Injunctions to the 12-14 year Old Lads During Initiation	64
3 <sub>2</sub> . Female Initiation:           The <i>Ofosi</i> Guild	64
4. Special Post-Initiation Instructions	67
a. To the Parents of the Young Lad	68
b. To A Newly-Wed Husband	68
c. To a Newly-Wed Wife	69
d. To the Parents of Newly-Weds	69
5. Methods of Traditional Moral Education	70
a. Learning By Doing: Apprenticeship And Emulation	70
b. Use of Stories	71
Story I: The Bride with Stained Teeth	72
Story II: Who is the Hero?	73
c. Use of Proverbs and Riddles	75
d. The Negative Way of Caution	77
6. Conclusion	78

### CHAPTER FOUR

#### MORAL EDUCATION FOR NATIONAL COHESION:

PROBLEMS AND RESOURCES	84
1. Role of Moral Education in National Cohesion	84
2. The Problem	85
a. Centrifugal Ethnic Tendencies	85
b. Inter-ethnic Rivalry	86
c. Tensions Arising from Differences in Social and Psychological Well Being	87
d. Differing Religious Attitudes	88
e. Lack of a Common National Language With Which All Can Identify	89
f. Contentious Educational Policies	90

3. Addressing the Problems: Government Action . . . . .	91
a. Critically Reviewing the Political System . . . . .	92
b. Review the Socio-Economic Structure . . . . .	93
c. Bridge the Social and the Psychological Distances . . . . .	93
d. Encourage Social Mobility	
Across Ethno-Linguistic Lines . . . . .	94
e. Review the System of Justice . . . . .	94
f. Massive Citizenship Education . . . . .	95
g. Review Educational Policies . . . . .	96
h. Improve Transport and Communications Links	
Between the Peoples. . . . .	97
4. The Constitution: Ideals and Reality . . . . .	98
5. The Challenges of Pluralism . . . . .	100
6. Nigeria's Religious Traditions: A Potential Resource . . . . .	102

## CHAPTER FIVE

WHAT CAN NIGERIA LEARN FROM WESTERN THEORY? . . . . .	114
1. Western Political Theories . . . . .	115
a. Some Problems . . . . .	115
i. Tendency to Universalise Western Perspectives . . . . .	115
ii. Selective Application of the Principles of	
Political Legitimacy . . . . .	117
iii. Inherent Ambivalence	
Within Each Political System . . . . .	118
b. Western Democracy Applied . . . . .	120
c. Pluralism and Political Systems . . . . .	124
2. Western Ethical Theories (of Virtue) . . . . .	126
a. Virtue As Obedience to the Law . . . . .	127
a <sub>1</sub> . Obedience to the Law and Personal Autonomy . . . . .	129
b. Virtue through the Upholding of Values . . . . .	131
c. Virtue as Knowledge . . . . .	133
d. Virtue through Examples: Paradigmatic Individuals . . . . .	135
3. Western Understanding of Religion . . . . .	138
a. Religion as Support for Morals . . . . .	139
b. Religion as Satisfying Special Human Hungers . . . . .	141
c. Religion as Providing Common Values for the	
Legitimation of the Social Order . . . . .	142

4. Recent Western Developmental Theories . . . . .	145
a. Psycho-Social Approach: Erikson . . . . .	145
b. Moral Reasoning: Piaget and Kohlberg . . . . .	147
c. How Adaptable to Nigeria's Situation? . . . . .	149

## CHAPTER SIX

### TOWARDS A DISTINCTIVELY NIGERIAN APPROACH . . . . . 160

1. The Possibility of Political Education Towards a non-Western Form of Democracy . . . . .	161
a. Using Distinctively Nigerian or Related Sources . . . . .	161
b. Model of Athenian Democracy . . . . .	167
c. Nyerere's Political Legacy . . . . .	168
d. Understanding Democracy and Putting It to Work . . . . .	170
2. The Possibility of Moral Education Building on the Strengths of Traditional Cultures . . . . .	173
a. Working in Harmony with the Mentality of the People . . . . .	175
b. Respecting the Traditional Methods of Proven Value . . . . .	176
c. Respecting the Traditional Institutions and Learning From Them . . . . .	176
d. More Increased Use of the Interactive Method . . . . .	177
e. Highlighting the Human, Spiritual, and Political Values . . . . .	177
f. Beginning the Child's Moral Education Early Enough in Life . . . . .	178
3. The Possibility of Religious Education Which Builds on Common Factors While Also Promoting Understanding of Differences . . . . .	179

## CHAPTER SEVEN

MORAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: A MODEL . . . . .	187
1. The School . . . . .	188
2. The Model Educator . . . . .	190
3. The Students . . . . .	197
4. The Content . . . . .	198
a. Traditional Moral Code . . . . .	199
b. The Ethical Aspect of Religion . . . . .	200
b <sub>1</sub> . From Traditional Religion . . . . .	201
<i>Ofó-na-ógù</i> : Principle and Application . . . . .	201

b <sub>2</sub> . From Islam . . . . .	204
i. Moral Teachings . . . . .	204
ii. The <i>Ramadan</i> Fast . . . . .	205
iii. Almsgiving . . . . .	205
b <sub>3</sub> . From Christianity . . . . .	206
i. Common Brotherhood and Universal Love . . . . .	206
ii. The Demand for the Truth . . . . .	206
iii. The Law of Kindness . . . . .	207
c. From the Political Life . . . . .	207
5. Methods . . . . .	208
a. Eschewing Negative Approaches . . . . .	209
b. Using Descriptive-Analytic Approaches . . . . .	211
c. Applying a Special Nigerian Touch . . . . .	211
d. Counselling:	
A Necessary Companion To Moral Education . . . . .	212
6. The Basis for Integrated Religious Education . . . . .	213
7. The Religious Educator . . . . .	214
8. Religious Education and Praxis . . . . .	214
Appendix A: Nigerian National Anthem I (1960-1977) . . . . .	220
Appendix B: Nigerian National Anthem: (Current) . . . . .	221
Appendix C: The National Pledge . . . . .	221
Appendix D: Content of An Integrated	
Religious Education For Nigeria . . . . .	222
1. Traditional Religion . . . . .	222
a. The Basic Beliefs . . . . .	222
i. The Godian Creed . . . . .	222
ii. Belief in a Supreme Being . . . . .	223
iii. The Earth-Goddess . . . . .	224
iv. Water Deities . . . . .	224
v. Cult to the Sun and the Moon . . . . .	225
vi. Storm Gods . . . . .	225
b. Basic Practices . . . . .	225

5. Islamic Religion . . . . .	226
a. The Basic Teachings . . . . .	226
b. Basic Beliefs . . . . .	226
i. The Supreme God . . . . .	226
ii. About Idols . . . . .	227
iii. About Jesus . . . . .	227
iv. About Heaven and the <i>Parousia</i> . . . . .	227
v. About Hell . . . . .	228
vi. On Predestination . . . . .	228
c. Basic Practices . . . . .	229
i. Prayer . . . . .	229
ii. The Holy Pilgrimage . . . . .	229
6. The Christian Religion . . . . .	229
a. Basic Beliefs . . . . .	229
i. The Nicene Creed . . . . .	229
ii. Belief Centred on the Life and Teaching of Christ . . . . .	230
b. The Teachings of Christ . . . . .	230
i. The Fatherhood of God . . . . .	231
ii. Future Life . . . . .	231
iii. Faith Required For Special Divine Favours . . . . .	231
iv. Salvation from Sin . . . . .	231
c. Christian Practices and Observances . . . . .	232
i. Christian Pilgrimage . . . . .	232
ii. The Sacraments . . . . .	232
7. A General Scheme Incorporating	
Material from the Three Religions . . . . .	233
a. General Introduction . . . . .	233
b. Traditional Religion . . . . .	233
c. Islam . . . . .	233
d. Christianity . . . . .	234
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	236

## INTRODUCTION

*Uprightness makes a nation great,  
By sin whole races are disgraced.  
– Proverbs 14:34.*

*But such is the irresistible nature of truth,  
that all it asks – and all it wants –  
is the liberty of appearing.  
– THOMAS PAINE, *The Rights of Man*.*

This dissertation was embarked upon on grounds of three basic presuppositions: a) that in Nigeria there is a need to be met by a programme of moral education; b) that such a moral education is achievable in real life rather than in the world of ideas alone; c) and that it is not just any moral education, but one that will be effective in rendering those so educated worthy citizens who have acquired sound moral habits and dispositions to enable them live and work together in harmony with others for the good of all.

There is a certain unanimity among Nigerians in desiring a more moral, more just, and a better-organised society than what they currently experience. Thus most conversations among Nigerians tend to veer towards issues about Nigeria's situation, and they are mostly complaints about injustice, underdevelopment, and corrupt leadership. A number of books by Nigerian authors have given full expression to these complaints. Among the best known are those by Nigeria's best-known writers Wole Soyinka and Chinua Achebe. Wole Soyinka's *The Man Died* is a complaint about a decadent Nigeria whose corrupt leadership tends to thrive on stepping on the toes of the common people with arrogant impunity. Chinua Achebe's *The Trouble with Nigeria* is an indictment of the double standards with which the rich and powerful turn everything to their favour and against the interests of the ordinary citizens.

This dissertation is in a way a "joining-in" in this discussion about Nigeria, but this time at the level of moral education. It tries to take account of the entire situation in Nigeria with a view to working out a general framework for bringing about a moral environment through an effective moral education. It tries to identify the historical, moral, religious, and socio-political points of reference for any present or future discussion of the question of moral education in Nigeria. In pursuance of this end it

embarks on wide-ranging discussions about the roles that can possibly be played by Nigeria's historical antecedents, traditional education, and political landscape in the light of some ethical theories and principles.

This work consists of seven chapters. The first chapter is a detailed background information about the situation of education in general in Nigeria. It serves to place the analysis in the ensuing chapters in perspective especially for those who might be unfamiliar with the Nigerian situation. It is certainly a useful reminder as well for one who is more familiar. Through the unfolding of this introductory chapter, one is quickly confronted with the ever-present problems and challenges of pluralism on the ethnic, social, political and religious levels, and their implications for moral education.

The second chapter analyzes some of the basic concepts in moral education discourse -- morality, ethics, education, moral education and considers the scope and methods of moral education.

The third chapter analyzes approaches to moral education in traditional Nigerian society dealing with such issues as motives, means and methods for action.

The fourth chapter discusses moral education in the context of cultural, ethno-linguistic, and religious pluralism in Nigeria, and how it can pave the way for national cohesion.

The fifth chapter highlights the rich legacies provided Western political, religious and ethical theories as possible stepping stones for Nigeria's bid to meet her own unique circumstances.

Mindful of Nigeria's own resources and considering the possible benefits of Western theory the sixth chapter proposes a distinctly Nigerian approach to moral education.

The concluding seventh chapter proceeds to propose a model course content for moral education that is capable of catering to Nigeria's special circumstances.



## CHAPTER ONE

### NIGERIA: AN OVERVIEW

*I will make the most splendid race the sun has ever shone upon,  
I will make divine magnetic lands  
With love of comrades.  
I will plant companionship thick as trees...*  
– WALT WHITMAN, *For You, O Democracy*.

*You can be a Finn or a Dane and an American.  
You can be a German or French and an American.  
Jew, Bohunk, Nigger, Mick – all dirty names  
We call each other – and yet an American.*  
– STEPHEN VINCENT BENET, *Nightmare at Noon*.

The country now called Nigeria has only been under one government during the present century, since 1914 to be exact. The word Nigeria, had only been thought of some twenty years earlier.<sup>1</sup> Geographical influences have indeed made the area a natural region which could be considered by itself.

#### 1. Sources of Information

The Portuguese came to the Nigerian coasts in the 15th century AD, and have left records of that part of the country as they observed it. Writings in other European languages, including English, deal with later periods. Writings in English, both by Europeans and by Africans who know the language, are very numerous about comparatively recent events, and are the chief sources of modern Nigerian history. The use of written sources in general, including those that are not Nigerian, can only take us back about 500 years into the past. In any case, oral tradition among some of the Nigerian peoples extends back at least five hundred years earlier than the written evidence. Naturally, as a historical source its limitations are only too obvious.

Nigerian languages were not reduced to the written form until relatively recently. According to M.C. English, of the main languages in Nigeria, only Fulani, Kanuri, and Hausa have been reduced to writing for more than a hundred and fifty years.<sup>2</sup> Those three were first written in Arabic letters about five hundred years ago, (Kanuri was a little earlier.) Only very few people could write them, and none of the actual

writings of the age survive today. This was due to a Fulani rebellion in 1804 in which many of the ancient records are said to have been destroyed. Later writings, undoubtedly based on earlier ones, naturally give only an incomplete outline of the history of the larger states of the Hausa country.

The bulk of early writings on Nigeria was in languages other than those of the country. Arab travellers from North Africa visited the lands on the southern side of the Sahara desert, and there are some writings in Arabic describing the countries near Nigeria between the 10th and the 16th centuries AD. Unfortunately none of the travellers who wrote about their journeys actually came into what is now Nigeria, though they make some references to it. According to M.C. English, Hausa was the first Nigerian language written in Roman letters in 1843, and Kanuri was written in 1853, while others came much later.<sup>3</sup>

Climatic conditions are also a factor in obscuring the Nigerian past to researchers. M.C. English suggests that the dry climate in the north of Nigeria preserves things longer than the wetter conditions of the south. For this reason archaeology has been able to provide greater knowledge of the remote past of the north than of the south of Nigeria. It seems reasonable to suggest, however, that the scantiness of information could well have been as a result of a paucity of archaeological ventures rather than from the definitive lack of archaeological findings.<sup>4</sup>

## **2. The Peoples of Nigeria: Diversity of Origins**

All the tribes of Nigeria have unwritten traditions about their own history and the origins of their tribes. In particular, each clan can tell the names of its founder and members of his family who set up separate homesteads, and something of the quarrels or other reasons which led to these separations. There are also traditions about the origins of the tribe as a whole. However, no one could put a date to these events. People rely mostly on the oral information from the older folk.

Almost all the traditions of Nigerian tribes have one thing in common: they suggest that the tribe migrated to its present home from somewhere in an easterly direction, even if the exact times and places are a matter of speculation. The Hausas claim to come from Baghdad, while the Yorubas, especially those of them that have adopted the

Mohammedan religion, have a tradition that Mecca was the place of origin of their tribe. The other tribes like the Igbos, Ibibios and Jukuns believe they originally came from Egypt, while yet others like the Borgu name Arabia as their first home. Most Fulanis believe they came originally from Persia.<sup>5</sup>

The process of the formation of the tribes naturally took several centuries. According to historians, during the period when the present Nigerian tribes were being formed and taking up their present abodes, the only practical routes for large numbers of people to travel were through the open country of Sudan, which covers all of Northern Nigeria. It is a type of country favourable not only to migrations connected with wars and conquests, but to the wanderings of the nomadic tribes in search of pasture for their herds.

The immigrants (between A.D. 700 and 1000) came through the savannah country of Sudan from the east. Their movements are traceable not only in Nigeria but in Chad to the North-east. They were generally described as the Berbers, a name which in Nigerian tradition applies to any of the non-negro inhabitants of Northern Africa. That they were a pagan people -- not practising either Christianity or Islam -- was proved by their conversion to Islam at a later date.<sup>6</sup> Thus, over a period of five hundred years or so, wave after wave of more or less civilized people were displaced from their homes in the Nile valley and North Africa to take refuge wherever they could, mostly in the desert fringe. Some historians believe that the newcomers to Nigeria included descendants of these exiled people, possibly mingled with the nomadic tribes already living in the desert.

After the drying up of the Sahara, migrants could only reach Nigeria from the east or west. They could not come from the north because it is only in fairly recent times that people have learned how to cross the Sahara desert in small parties by camel caravans, and to this day, it is hardly possible for whole tribes to move into Nigeria by that route. Migrants could hardly have entered Nigeria from the south either, since that would have meant crossing the sea, and no one could build ships strong enough to make such daring voyage until very recently indeed.<sup>7</sup>

During the two or three centuries before the arrival of the Berbers in Nigeria, there had been series of disturbances in North Africa and particularly in the upper Nile valley. Whole populations were displaced and sought safety elsewhere. By about AD

350 already, the kingdom of Nubia had been completely destroyed, probably by the Abyssinians, and its peoples were driven out. It is conceivable that some of them could have found their way into what is now Nigeria.

### 3. European Contacts

The first recorded contact between Nigeria and Europe was in the 15th century. Credit goes to a Portuguese prince, Henry, who later became known as Henry the Navigator, as the first European to land on the West coast of Africa. In 1472, there was a Portuguese expedition commanded by a man named Sequeira. This expedition landed in Lagos which was the first natural harbour that ships coming from Europe would reach after passing the estuary in Sierra Leone beside which Freetown now stands. Lagos was a colony of Benin, and through the people Sequeira sent messages to the Oba of Benin. He did not go inland himself. It was with Benin that the Portuguese established trade relations in Nigeria in 1483. An expedition commanded by one Aveiro sailed up the creeks as far as Ugwato and from there travelled overland to Benin. Friendly relations were made with the Oba, and when the expedition returned to Portugal, it carried a cargo of pepper, then very scarce in Europe. The Oba of Benin was favourably impressed by the strangers, and sent the chief of Ugwato with them as his ambassador to the King of Portugal. As a result the Portuguese set up a permanent trading post at Ugwato in 1486.

Further contact with Europe came largely from the slave trade. In the Niger delta, many small communities and their chiefs, though not controlling large areas like Benin or Warri, obtained their wealth and fame from their position as traders who collected slaves for resale to Europeans. Such were the chiefs of Brass, the Kalabara, and Bonny. Calabar owes its foundation to the European trade. Its site was selected by the Efik branch of the Ibibio people in about the year 1600 for its suitability for controlling the (slave) trade of the Cross River.

A chief source of the slaves exported through Calabar was Arochukwu. Even before the building of Calabar, the Portuguese are said to have entered the Cross River, and to have visited Arochukwu.<sup>8</sup> As a matter of fact, the articles of trade from Europe were usually guns and gunpowder, which were exchanged for slaves. These enabled the

coastal people to make war successfully against the tribes of the interior, who had no guns, and so to obtain many slaves for sale to the Europeans. In other words, one could claim that the slave racket had some direct bearing with the souring of neighbourly relations between the coastal peoples of Nigeria and the peoples of the hinterland. Instead of peaceful coexistence the coastal peoples assumed a belligerent and predatory stance against each other. It was definitely in the interest of the racketeers to maintain this state of affairs. A new, albeit negative, dimension -- greed -- was thus introduced to the moral environment. It was the loss of scruples over human values in pursuit of lucre. This development was later to act as a boomerang, for the fact that by the massive shipment of captives who, in view of the purpose for which they were being bought, generally had to be young, strong and healthy. Their removal from their native land therefore constituted to the latter an inestimable loss of human resources, a devastating blow on political cohesiveness, and a general fraying of the social and cultural fabrics that constituted them into a people that could hold their own among other peoples. One result of this situation is that they were practically powerless to fight off the inroads of colonialism when it came because they were not united. It was therefore easier to contain and subdue them in their little pockets of resistance than it would have been had they been able to constitute a united and cohesive fighting force to resist the incursions of foreign colonial powers.

#### **4. Colonial Administration**

In the 18th century, Britain was the dominant slave-trading power in West Africa. By the turn of the 19th century, precisely the period after 1808, it shifted its attention to abolition, maintaining a large naval squadron off the West African coast. In the meantime, Britain also sponsored explorations of the interior and approved missionary activities. West African explorers concentrated on the Niger river. First Mungo Park, and then Hugh Clapperton, Dixon Denham, and Walter Oudney explored regions adjacent to the river, and in 1830, Richard and John Lander traced its course through the delta.

British occupation of Nigeria was triggered by French and German expansionism which in the 1880's challenged British supremacy in Africa. Direct political control

eastward from the Niger delta was accomplished by the declaration of the Oil Rivers Protectorate in 1885. Slowly British influence permeated the Ibibio and Ijaw areas. Jaja of Opobo was defeated in 1887, Nana of Brass was overthrown in 1895, and Benin was conquered in 1897. Final occupation of the eastern areas was made possible in 1902 when Sir Ralph Moor, the British governor, sent the Aro Military expedition into Igboland.

A second phase of British occupation occurred thanks to Sir George Goldie's commercial company, the Royal African Company, which gained near monopoly of interior trade, bypassed native traditional traders and established posts along the Niger river. A royal charter granted to the company in 1886 empowered its representatives to act as political agents. These agents signed agreements with Igbo, Bini, and Hausa rulers, giving the company protectorate rights over a vast area.<sup>9</sup> Later, the British government bought out the company and assumed direct jurisdiction over its territories on January 1, 1900.

Prior to the period 1906-1912, the British governed what is now Nigeria as two separate Protectorates -- one in the South and one in the North. These two protectorates were administered at completely different levels. The North was mostly Muslim, and the South practised African traditional religion. While the Muslims resisted any form of Westernization, those in the South were more susceptible. In the North, the colonial administrators applied the system of indirect rule whereby they commissioned the Emirs -- the traditional rulers among the Muslims -- to govern the people while remaining responsible to them. No such system existed in the South, and so indirect rule was difficult to apply. The British government tried to introduce indirect rule in the South by appointing the so-called "warrant chiefs". Southerners, particularly the Igbos were not in the least interested in warrant chiefs and relentlessly opposed the policy. They despised the warrant chiefs for at least three reasons: most of them were of low stock;<sup>10</sup> they saw them as agents of a foreign power out to take away their autonomy; finally, they believed that their presence and operation would be disruptive of the way of life they had been used to.

At that point in time, Nigeria was technically two separate entities. Then the colonial administration thought it was a good idea to merge the two entities to form one. Michael Crowder assesses the situation:

(It) is one of the most crucial (periods) in the history of Nigeria, for it marks both the beginning of the rejection of standards and customs that had endured for centuries. It was the first time that Nigerians were subjected in any large measure to Western influences, which in the next fifty years were to have such a great effect on the Nigerian society.<sup>11</sup>

The immediate reason for the decision to amalgamate the two Nigerias was economic expediency. The Northern Protectorate was running at a severe deficit, which was being met by a subsidy from the Southern protectorate, and an Imperial (British) grant-in-aid of about 300,000 pounds a year.<sup>12</sup> This disequilibrium has never left Nigeria and whenever it has been addressed some Nigerians have always felt cheated while those subsidized have a field day.

The colonial administration remained in office until 1960, when Nigeria attained independence. By the time of independence, however, the two protectorates had given birth to three regions: the North, the East, and the West. The Northern Region, even with its massive land area, remained intact while the South was split in two, to form the Eastern and Western Regions. Soon a fourth Region, the Mid-West, was carved out of the Western Region. The various regions had very little in common save the Federation of Nigeria. The peoples were practically going their separate ways. In 1967 the split was further carried on when out of the existing four regions twelve states were created. Nine years later five more were added, and in 1988 the number was brought to twenty-two, including the new Capital Territory of Abuja.

Some people think the creation of states removed the problem of minority groups, accelerates development, and increases opportunities. Others point to the polarizing effect of the splitting-up and the severe erosion of national consciousness in favour of "state-ism", a new dimension of ethnicity and tribalism. What the forgers of Nigeria intended in the act of amalgamation has thus been thoroughly reversed and the centre constantly gives the impression of caving in.

## 5. Christianity and Missionaries

Portuguese traders had been doing business in Nigeria and some of them had been resident in Benin during the 16th and 17th centuries. But when they ceased to reside in Benin, the priests and missionaries continued to visit from Sao Tome. There is a record of Spanish missionaries staying at Benin from 1654 to 1655, when they were driven out by the Portuguese because of the enmity existing between their two nations at the time.<sup>13</sup> It must be pointed out, however, that neither the Portuguese nor the Spanish missionaries made any impression whatever on the Binis at that stage. At Warri, the only other part of Nigeria which Portuguese Missionaries are known to have visited, they had very slightly more success. Thus the two successive kings of Warri were Christian until the second of the two was deposed by a pagan rival.<sup>14</sup>

Between about 1839 and 1845, several hundred former slaves returned from Sierra Leone to their own people. They had become Christians in Sierra Leone, and at their request missionaries came over to keep them in touch with their churches. The first such visitor in 1842 was Thomas Birch Freeman, a half-caste born and brought up in England, and a Methodist. The first to settle permanently was Henry Townsend who, having set up a station in Badagry in 1842, visited Abeokuta in 1843 and resided there from 1846. Other missionaries included Samuel Ajayi Crowther, who was later to be appointed bishop. He was a native Nigerian but among the freed slaves. There was also J.C. Taylor, an Igbo freed slave who had been ordained in Sierra Leone.

The Roman Catholics were first represented in Nigeria by one Borghero, an Italian priest. In 1865, Onitsha was visited by the Holy Ghost Fathers from Fernando Po (now Equatorial Guinea), but they likewise were handicapped by the unreliable communications, so that the continuous history of the Roman Catholic Church in Onitsha dates from the arrival of Father Joseph Lutz, a French Holy Ghost Missionary, in 1885.

Religious and moral teaching was the first concern of the missionaries, but not to the exclusion of other needs that would improve the lives of the people. Adeniji Adaralegbe powerfully summarizes their role:



All the missions agreed with the dictum of Thomas Buxton that "the missionary, the school-master, the plough and the spade should go together." Thus the missionaries, as early as 1864, had started a policy of agricultural education in the schools. The CMS (Church Missionary Society) had tried, not too successfully, to establish industrial institutions at Abeokuta and later at Onitsha and Lokoja to encourage the cultivation and export of cotton. Similarly, the CMS started brick fields in Ebutte Metta (1866), and the RCM (Roman Catholic Mission) established a large scale programme of agriculture at Topo Industrial School, near Badagry, in 1876 where gari was being made from cassava by means of a simple machine.<sup>15</sup>

Among the contributions of missionaries through Christian and other teaching include bringing an end to such practices as human sacrifice, slavery, and the killing of twins. They also brought about the conversion of Nigerian languages into the written form<sup>16</sup>. The teaching of English opened the way to learning of the modern world. Finally, a general broadening of the mind was achieved among the Nigerian population. Not to be ignored, however is the bitter rivalry that developed among the religious groups, a phenomenon that has never departed from the scene.

## **6. Missionaries and Beginnings of Western Education**

The beginnings of Western education in Nigeria are usually linked with the efforts of Christian Missionaries. According to Christopher C. Ifemeje, the missionaries of the Wesleyan Methodist Church were the first to arrive in Nigeria with the intention to spread Western Education<sup>17</sup>. In 1841, a Yoruba liberated slave called Ferguson returned to his home in Badagry and began to persuade the chiefs to bring into Badagry missionaries from Sierra Leone who would bring them European civilization.

On September 24 1842, Thomas B. Freeman, a descendant of a negro slave, accompanied by two others, Mr and Mrs de Graft, arrived in Badagry and started at once to establish missions. When the British and the king and people of Lagos signed the treaty following British conquest of the city in 1852, the Wesleyan School in Badagry was transferred to Lagos. The number of their schools in Yorubaland increased. In 1878, Wesleyan Boys High School was built in Lagos. By 1879 the

Wesleyan Mission had completed the building of a Girls High School in Lagos. In 1905 they had build the Wesleyan Training College in Ibadan.

Educational activities of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) or Church of England, began in the West by 1843, but spread to the East in 1857 with the arrival of Ajayi Crowther.

The Missionaries of the Church of Scotland arrived in Calabar in 1846 and soon their educational influence spread along the Cross River.

The Missionaries of the African Mission of South Baptist Convention began educational work in Nigeria in 1853. It was not until 1860 that the Catholic Missionaries entered the scene in 1860 when they started work at Whydah<sup>18</sup>.

There were several missionary bodies with their political, economic and denominational sympathies, working as hard as they could to establish as many schools as they thought possible with the resources at their disposal. Severe competition existed between each missionary body and its neighbours.<sup>19</sup> The early schools were make-shift and improvisorial in their operation but were geared towards the production of specified skills as Ifemeje graphically describes:

Most of the schools, because of lack of teachers, used the monitorial system, a system in which older students were made to teach younger ones... The mission schools served both rich and poor. The pupils of the missions were therefore expected, after their schooling, to become assistants to the missionaries and government or company officials. Consequently, such subjects as English, Arithmetic and certain trades such as carpentry were taught<sup>20</sup>.

Elizabeth Isichei attributes the success of Western education through the mission schools to two main factors, namely, the people's thirst for education on the one hand, and the colonial government's need for educated African personnel on the other<sup>21</sup>. There were, however, certain aspects of missionary education that brought it in conflict with traditional systems, values and practices. E.U. Akusoba focuses on some of them:

With the advent of Christianity and formal education in Africa, some of the roles of (traditional trainers, leaders and educators), were challenged. Firstly, the Christian religion challenged the monopoly of these leaders to knowledge and set out to train their own leaders and teachers. After some years of training, these were pushed back to the community to teach the reading of the Bible to the Youth and the community at large. After their training, these men came back to their communities and soon showed knowledge and skills which the community youth trainers and leaders had not. They could talk and discuss with the Whiteman, they could read, and sometimes write.<sup>22</sup>

The Church leaders questioned and ridiculed the existence, the very nature and role of the initiation centres. In some places the centres were proscribed as pagan and anti-social. And instead of the native way of life and style of worship, the Bible (and, where applicable, the Koran), became and were gradually accepted as the only means to the good life and to morality. The resulting denigration of traditional values and customs, and the loss of moral authority by those who traditionally wielded it in the community, has remained a source of resentment in many quarters, and created a crisis of values, of conscience, of loyalties, and even of identity for a great many Nigerians.

The question of methods and goals of missionary school education has also been a point of criticism. The Catholic Missionaries are often criticized for "making education their sole means of proselytization"<sup>23</sup>, a charge which has been repeated in many different quarters of Nigeria in such other words as indoctrination, imperialism, neo-colonialism.

Another characteristic of the new system was the appointment of people from outside the community to train the youth, and without any consultation with the people. At first this generated a revolution and conflict of ideas in which the initiation leaders gradually surrendered to the more forceful religious groups. This marked, in Akusoba's words, "the quenching of the fire of cultural transmission by those who were perhaps better qualified to teach them."<sup>24</sup> The result was that the early teachers, apart from being religious leaders, soon became the link between the colonial government and the local people as scribes, tax-collectors, dispensers of justice; in short they soon became masters of everything else.

## 7. Contact With Islam

According to Basil Davidson, records of Africa South of the Sahara could be traced to Walib Ibn Munnabeh who wrote in 738.<sup>25</sup> Peter Clarke and I. Linden, however, trace the presence of Muslims in Borno to the second half of the 11th century.<sup>26</sup> Our knowledge of the ancient kingdoms of Kush, Kumbi, Saleh, Timbuctu, Bornu, Mali, Songhay, Sokoto, etc, was derived largely from Arab travellers and historians. From Walib ibn Munnabeh in 738 to Leo Africanus in 1526, at least a score of notable Arab and Berber historians and geographers wrote of these Negro states; and to this must be added the writings of Western Sudan itself.

Islam reached the savannah region of West Africa in the 8th century AD, the date from which written history of West Africa begins. As Islam spread in the savanna of West Africa commercial links with North Africa developed. Trade and commerce also paved the way for the introduction of material culture, and made possible intellectual development and the introduction of literacy. According to Babs Fafunwa, at about 1257, a college and hostel were established in Cairo for the scholars of the Kanem-Bornu region who came there in search of knowledge.<sup>27</sup>

Islam was brought to Hausaland in the early 14th century by traders and scholars. About forty Wangarawa traders are thought to be responsible for introducing Islam to Kano during the reign of 'Ali Yayji (1349-1385). A mosque was built, and Imams Muezzin and Qadi were appointed. During the reign of Yaqub (1452-1463) some Fulani scholars migrated to Kano, bringing with them books on Islamic theology and jurisprudence. During the reign of Mohammed Rumfa (1463-1499), Islam became firmly rooted and Islamic principles were taught in different places. It was during this period that Muslims from Timbuctu came to Kano to teach and preach Islam.

Islam spread steadily and by the middle and later 17th century, Katsina which had also become a centre of Islam had produced its own native scholars like Muhammadu Dan Masina (d.1667) and Muhammadu Dan Marina (d.1655). Learning developed among these *ulama* or learned men through contacts with centres of learning like Timbuctu. A group of these *mallams* or teachers, most of whom seem to be interrelated, formed an intellectual community, and among them the state of learning was

much higher.<sup>28</sup> Thus at the time of the colonial administration or established Christian missionary activity, and at least four centuries before the amalgamation that gave birth to Nigeria as known today, Islam was already flourishing in Northern Nigeria. The North was thus unquestionably culturally more advanced than their southern counterparts. J.S. Trimingham notes:

Through the system of intellectual and material culture, Islam opens new horizons... the Religion of the Book, and from this stems the superiority Muslims display when confronted with pagans.<sup>29</sup>

By 1900, when Frederick Lugard with the British forces moved into the Muslim heartland of the North, he did not meet a homogeneous Muslim community. There were substantial pockets of non-muslim communities. For this reason large non-Muslim populations were interspersed with Muslims in emirates where emirate authority was weak. The term "Maguzawa" was used by Muslims for these communities who were permitted to live in peace alongside Muslims.<sup>30</sup>

In its areas of influence Islam orchestrated and preached Islamic world-view with specific injunctions on marriage, the role of women, the nature and seriousness of certain sins, the Hajj or Pilgrimage, the Sharia or Islamic Law.

Of the three major religious groups in Nigeria<sup>31</sup> -- Christianity, Islam, and Traditional Religion -- Christianity seems, by the last decade of the 20th century, to have been decisively gaining the upper hand. As a result there has occurred a situation where the influence of traditional religion seems to wane, and Islam's area of influence in Nigeria seems to continually shrink. The aggressive proselytising methods adopted by Christian missionaries rapidly depleted the numbers of adherents to Traditional Religion, and the gods of the tribal religions seemed, in the words of E.I. Metuh, "in retreat".<sup>32</sup> The retreat has been so sweeping that the membership has dwindled from 100% in pre-colonial, pre-Christian, and pre-Islamic incursions to a mere 5.6% of the total population. [See Table 1 below].

A breakdown of the figures showed that the Catholics made more converts than the protestants. As David Abernethy shows, by 1921 RCM schools accounted for over 16% of school enrollment in the West and over 33% enrollment in the East; 29% of Nigerian

Protestants were Igbos, 30% Yorubas, while 66% of Catholics were Igbos and 10% of Catholics were Yorubas.<sup>33</sup>

Christianity fared better than Islam with respect to winning over new adherents. Part of the reason was that while the colonial protection of Islam in the Northern part of Nigeria made it strong and assertive there, it also had the negative effect of insulating people from the Islamic parts of the North against the influence of western-style education which their Christian counterparts, eagerly embraced. The majority of Northern Nigerians outside the Islamic areas embraced Christianity and benefited from Western education. In Yorubaland, a lot of Muslim children had to convert to Christianity in order to benefit from the western education made available in the Christian Missionary schools. This situation has not been a source of amusement for the Muslims who, at the present moment, are making every effort to stem the tide of Christianity. The following graphic representation will illustrate the rapid growth of Christianity in Nigeria in the 20th century:<sup>34</sup>

Year	Afr Religion	Islam	Christianity
1900	73.0%	25.9%	1.1%
Mid-1970	10.8%	44.0%	44.9%
Mid-1975	8.0%	44.5%	47.2%
Mid-1980	5.6%	45.0%	49.0%
AD 2000	3.0%	45.4%	51.2%

Source: World Christian Encyclopaedia (1980), p.257.

## 8. Rivalry: Pluralism's Occupational Hazard

Northern Nigeria was not merely a region, it was a vast country in its own right. Over twice the size of the United Kingdom, it had a population larger than any other country in the whole of Africa with the exception of Egypt.<sup>35</sup> The majority of the people were Muslims, but there were little pockets of non-Muslims – probably remnants of the original owners of Nigeria. (The dominance of Islam in Northern Nigeria persists till the present time, but what the adherents to Christianity and Traditional Religion lack in numbers, they make up in enthusiasm and commitment).

In four of the provinces of the Northern Region -- Sokoto, Katsina, Kano and Zaria - live the Hausas. Their stubborn will to resist was strong enough to turn aside, or retreat from and yet return, the invasion of powerful armies. But no matter who conquered them, or brushed them aside, the Hausas remained.

The Hausas had as their neighbours the Fulanis. The latter had many admirable qualities, but perhaps because of their religion they had a shocking attitude towards suffering in others. As Williams puts it, "theirs was the slave trail to Tripoli, a trail paved with human bones".<sup>36</sup> Very little is known about the Fulani, in common with so many of Nigeria's peoples. Long before they appeared in the role of conquerors, they had begun to infiltrate peacefully as migrants. For a long time they intermingled with, and intermarried with the Hausas among whom, by reason of their keen intelligence, they usually managed to obtain high office.

In the Eastern Region were the Igbos. Williams describes them as "tough, hard-working, slightly dour, and great individualists." Unlike among the Hausa-Fulanis with the Emirs and Sultans, unlike the Yorubas with their Alafins, Obas, Oonis, the Igbos were, and still remain, thoroughgoing republicans. They had no chiefs except perhaps at Onitsha. They were devoted to the family ideal, and lived in a network of villages and walled compounds.

The Igbos were by far the largest tribe living in the Eastern Region. Aba, Owerri, Onitsha, Okigwe, constituted the Igbo heartland. They numbered (1962) about 8 million (now 18 million)<sup>‡</sup> in 30,000 square miles as against the 6 million (now 21.3 million) Yoruba<sup>‡</sup> in 30,000 square miles of the Western Region.<sup>37</sup>

In the Western Provinces the Yorubas occupied a position of even greater predominance. In the Provinces of Abeokuta, Oyo and Ijebu there were no non Yoruba groups of any size. In Ondo Yorubas represented 89% of the population, in Lagos they represented 83%. Beyond the regional boundary they were the dominant group in the population of Ilorin Province (76%), and constituted an important minority group in Kabba (13%). There were, in addition, important Yoruba groups beyond the Nigerian frontier in Dahomey (now Benin Republic).

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<sup>‡</sup> It is striking that the population of the Yoruba seems almost to quadruple in just over two and a half decades, while that of the Igbo barely doubled within the same period of time. See note 26 for some explanation.

The Yorubas were a clever, humorous, volatile people who were by nature more addicted to town-dwelling than the majority of Africans. They still held to the chieftain principle, and were contemptuous of the slowness of their "neighbours over the water", ie the Igbos across the River Niger. Another factor in this feeling of superiority felt by the Yorubas over the Igbos was the curious fact that townsfolk inevitably regarded villagers as rustics.

The predominance of the three major ethnic groups is almost absolute as the figures reveal. According to a 1988 estimate the figures (in millions) based on an estimated population of 100 million are as follows:<sup>38</sup>

Table 2:

Hausa	21.3	Yoruba	21.3	Igbo	18.0
Fulani	11.2	Ibibio	5.6	Kanuri	4.2
Edo	3.4	Tiv	2.2	Ijaw	1.8
Bura	1.7	Nupe	1.2	Others	8.1

Total: 100 Millions.

Source: *Encyclopaedia Britannica Book of the Year 1989* p.671.

It is quite interesting to try to compare the figures above with the 1931 figures shown in K.M. Buchanan & J.C. Pagh in Table 3 below. The total of 19.896 millions of 1931 represent approximately 20% of Nigeria's present population of an estimated 100 millions a quintupling of the population in about 60 years. Displaced as a result of the discrepancies with the population figures are the Igbo by the Yoruba; the Kanuri by the Ibibio; and the Tiv by the Edo.

Table 3:

Hausa	3.630	Igbo	3.185	Yoruba	3.166
Fulani	2.027	Kanuri	0.931	Ibibio	0.750
Tiv	0.577	Edo	0.508	Others	5.122

Total: 19.896 Millions

Source: K.M. Buchanan & J.C. Pagh, *Nigeria and Its Peoples*, p.84.

There is considerable truth in the remark of the old Fulani Emir who said that "God did not make Nigeria; the British did."<sup>39</sup> It is not by any means a united country. By long tradition, and a long record of struggles in the past, the Western Region detested



and despised the East, feelings most heartily reciprocated by the latter. But what the West and East -- Yorubas and Igbos -- felt for each other was nothing compared to the loathing both felt for the Northerners, the Fulanis and the Hausas. For their part, the Northerners regarded the people of the South as inferiors, slaves in the past, and if many of them had their way, slaves in the future. These sour feelings were kept muted, but would soon erupt in the violence of unprecedented proportions in the mid- and until the end of the decade of the 1960s.

## 9. Nigeria in Crisis

Nigeria attained political independence on October 1, 1960 and Nigerian politicians took over the reins of power. Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe became Governor General and later President. By 1963 Nigeria became a Federal Republic and opted for a Westminster-style Parliamentary Government. The moments of exultation were short-lived as widespread corruption in the high places led to all kinds of excesses. Politicians played up ethnic feelings that soon corroded the entire fabrics of national life by increasing inter- and intra-ethnic rivalries. Soon the marriage of convenience created by the amalgamation of 1914 was beginning to rock dangerously. Things began to happen in breathtaking succession: First there was the split along regional lines of the ruling coalition NCNC-NPC following disagreements over census figures; in the West there were violent riots which culminated in conviction and a ten-year sentence for treason of some prominent leaders of the Western Region and the Midwest for planning a violent overthrow of elected government. Everything came to a head on January 15, 1966, when a group of junior military officers violently overthrew the government and seized power. Many politicians were killed in the process. Elizabeth Isichei summarizes the situation as follows:

By the end of 1965, the malaise of Nigerian political life was universally recognized. In the West, all political authorities to be breaking down. The discontent and disillusion with the use the politicians had made of their autonomy were universal. This was the background to the coup of 15 January 1966.<sup>40</sup>

The plotters were more concerned to overthrow the corrupt government than to rebuild in its stead. There were assassinations in Kaduna, Ibadan, and Lagos. There was no coup in Benin, and the coup in Enugu was abortive. The casualties were concentrated in the North and West. There were none in the East and Mid-West, and this led to suspicions, sparked up by the British Broadcasting Corporation, that the Easterners, mostly the Igbos, had after all planned it in order to take over complete control of the country. This suggestion quickly caught on for the fact that most of the plotters turned out to be Igbo-speaking, while the victims turned out not to include even a single Igbo politician. That was indeed to provide the long-sought excuse to perpetrate violence against the Igbos throughout the North and West: Ethnicity was about to assume its worst character.

Contrary to speculations, the coup was not designed as a way to take control of Nigeria, but to purge Nigeria as a whole of corruption. In a radio broadcast sequel to the seizure of power, the leader of the coup, Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu stated reason for the coup:

Our enemies are the political profiteers, swindlers, the men in high and low places that seek bribes and demand ten per cents;<sup>41</sup> those that seek to keep the country permanently divided so that they can remain in office as ministers and VIPs of waste, the tribalists, the nepotists...<sup>42</sup>

The coup received country-wide welcome and Nigerians manifestly sympathetic with the reasons given by the mutineers for their action. When Nzeogwu fell in battle, his body taken to Kaduna where he was buried with full military honours. Before long, however, things began to take a new turn as the fact that no Igbo politician was killed in the coup began to be construed as a conspiracy to get rid of other politicians and establish Igbo domination. This view of things has not completely left the people of the North, and contributed in no small measure to the way in which the Hausa-Fulani held and continue to hold the Igbos. It was also an important factor in the bitterness with which the Nigeria-Biafra war was fought.

Mutual confidence never returned to Nigeria after that. More coups were planned, and more people killed. Analysts believe that the planners of the bloody counter coup had a secessionist intent for the North, but they were apparently dissuaded by

Northerners working in Lagos. Wole Soyinka describes the secret motives behind the counter coup:

The Northern Mafia got together with the Lagos counterparts and contributed the necessary investment for self-preservation. Cold-bloodedly the pogrom was planned, every stage plotted and the money for operations distributed to the various centres of mayhem. The Ibos, twice victims, were again the most obvious, the most logical victims of this new profit-motivated massacre. But so that the lesson would be complete, so that no danger remained of a return to the old inter-regional interference in the affairs of this base for all reactionary conspiracies, the "trouble-making" southerners, no matter from what region, were included in the massive sweep.<sup>43</sup>

According to Walter Schwarz, the idea behind the pogrom was to drive the Easterners out of the North -- perhaps out of Nigeria<sup>44</sup>. Both goals were achieved. It was the ex-politicians, civil servants, local government officials, and former party stalwarts that stage-managed the pogroms. The army, of course joined them.

The carnage was so incredible and the events that unfolded were not surprising. Prior to September 29 when the greatest numbers were massacred, no one talked of secession, but after that date, no one talked of anything else. Negotiations failed to resolve the problem, and agreements for a loose form of federation arrived at Aburi in Ghana were unilaterally reneged by Gowon who declared a twelve-state structure for Nigeria, apparently to weaken the influence of the Igbos in the East. The East declared secession on May 30, three days after Gowon's creation of twelve states.

In the bid to end the secession, Gowon declared a police action, later upgraded to a full-scale war against the East (now Biafra). For three gruesome years the cruel war raged on. Biafrans were convinced in the justice of their cause but lacked the backing of any foreign power. Nigeria pressed on fully backed by Britain, the Soviet Union, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria. Biafra managed to receive diplomatic recognition from Tanzania, Zambia, Gabon, Ivory Coast and Haiti.

Biafra gave up the struggle in 1970 and Gowon declared: **No victor, no vanquished!** It was a true manifestation of magnanimity in victory. Isichei was highly impressed both by the Igbos and the Nigerians:

But in the event, just as the Igbos had won the admiration of Nigeria, and the world, by their gallantry in war, so Nigeria won the admiration of the Igbos, and the world, by her magnanimity in victory.<sup>45</sup>

John St de Jorre is no less impressed by this amazing switch-over from hostility to amity:

When one considers the brutality, the proscription, the carefully maintained, immensely durable hatred that so often followed wars, in the "civilized" West, it may be that when history takes a longer view of Nigeria's war it will be shown that while the black man has little to teach us about making war, he has a real contribution to offer in making peace.<sup>46</sup>

Scars of the war, what went before and what followed after, will probably take generations to heal. People still remember in graphic detail the losses they bear, the heavy penalties they pay, the stigma of defeat, the remoteness of help, the envies, the rivalries, the rhetoric, all take their toll. Nigeria still has a problem trying to find a way out of the situation.

## 10. Nigeria's Present Predicament

Nigeria was an agglomeration of about 250 ethnic, tribal and linguistic groups. These groups suddenly found themselves banded together as a nation where "what is sauce for the goose was made to be sauce for the gander." This has meant considerable crisis of spirit among the groups. Soon dominant groups emerged and quickly overshadowed the rest and by sheer tyranny of the majority forced them to play the second fiddle in practically all national affairs. Then came Christianity (and Islam too!) with a brand new code of morality, which was supposed to supersede all others, and which was supposed to be valid in all circumstances for all peoples.

What ensued was a period of polarization among the tenets of Christianity *cum* Islam, the relentless intrusion of Western values, the ascendancy of the dominant ethnic groups, and morality as understood and practised by each people. The polarization is still far from resolved.

When Christianity established itself, it quickly carried the up-coming generation with it, thereby digging into the future. Unfortunately, it was not free from bitter rivalries between Catholics and Protestants -- conflicts which were transferred to their new adherents. In the recent years, this religious conflict has moved bases from Catholic versus Protestant to Christian versus Muslim. The issue is whether or not to have a Federal Sharia Court of Appeal in Nigeria, effectively giving the Nigerian secular judicial system an Islamic tinge.

An explosive controversy started when the 1979 Constitution was in the drafting stage, it was recommended by the Sub-Committee on the Judicial System that there be "a Federal Sharia Court of Appeal which shall be an intermediate Court of Appeal between the State's Sharia Courts of Appeal and The Supreme Court of Nigeria."<sup>47</sup> The ensuing debate on the necessity of a Federal Sharia Court of Appeal was rancorous and tension-packed. While Christians thought it was a ploy for a systematic Islamization of the country, Muslims insisted that the existing constitutional provisions have been mightily influenced by Christian values. Later on Christians would point to the huge government subsidies for Muslims making their annual *Hajj* to Mecca to the tune of \$130.80 million in 1981.<sup>48</sup> Meanwhile the Christians who also made pilgrimages to Rome and Jerusalem received no such subsidies and wondered why one religion was being sponsored contrary to the provisions of the Constitutions.

To further complicate matters, Nigeria was in January 1987 committed to the full membership of the OIC. As a full member, as against an observer status which Nigeria has had since the founding of the Conference in May 1971, Nigeria had to be fully committed to the objectives of the Conference. The Objectives include the promotion of Islam by all member states, and justice and love to member States. In due course more details have been emerging, which were kept secret because of their obviously explosive tone. The stated objectives of the OIC as contained in a recent document include:

1. To ensure the appointment of only Muslims into strategic national and international posts of member nations.
2. To eradicate in all its forms and ramifications all non-Muslim religions in member nations (such religions shall include Christianity, Ahmadiyya and other tribal modes of worship unacceptable to Muslims).
3. To ensure that only Muslims are elected to all political posts of member nations.
4. To ensure the declaration of Nigeria (the 24th African and 46th World member of the OIC) a federal Islamic sultanate at a convenient date any time from 28th March, 1990, with the Sultan of Sokoto enthroned the Sultan and Supreme Sovereign of Nigeria.
5. To ensure the ultimate replacement of all western forms of legal and judicial systems with the Sharia in all member nations before the next Islamic Conference.<sup>49</sup>

In March 1987 at the College of Education in Kafanchan, a female Muslim student physically attacked a young male student recently converted from Islam to Christianity during a Christian Fellowship Rally. The ensuing violence snowballed to engulf the whole city and twenty five people lost their lives. But for the timely intervention of the police, the casualties would have been a lot higher. A total of 40 Christian churches, 3 mosques, 30 hotels, and 46 private homes were burnt down in what President Babangida described as "a civilian equivalent of an attempted coup d'état organized against the Federal Military Government and the Nigerian nation."<sup>50</sup>

Nigeria has experienced twenty-nine years of political independence under eight successive governments. Only eight out of twenty-nine years and two out of eight governments have been under democratically constituted leadership. The rest have been under successive military dictatorships who came to power by force. Since the military governments were not elected, one great problem has been to be able to hold them responsible for how they govern. A central source of concern for most Nigerians is why the military are quick to seize power, promote themselves to the highest ranks, reap all benefits and then quit. Some people are even beginning to consider it a possibility to have the armed forces as a political party with guaranteed cabinet posts in some future

arrangement called **diarchy**, a Greek concept which roughly means "two-[power]-sources" here proposed for Nigeria by its former President, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe.

There is also an overall disenchantment over the ability or disposition of the armed forces to govern the country effectively. Is it not high time that they stepped down and concentrate on the business of defence for which they were established.

Nigeria is also faced with the problem of Islamic Fundamentalism seeking to take over the whole country, carrying out killings and arson against non-Muslims, secretly registering Nigeria as an Islamic State. A self-styled spokesman for Muslims, Abubakar Gumi stated bluntly his goal of islamization, failing which the country should split up:

*If we want Nigeria to be a great country, to join hands, we have to follow one faith... I don't think we can accept a Christian to be our leader unless we are forced... Nigerian unity, if I am to do my best, is to try to convert Christians and non-Muslims as much as possible -- until the other religions become minority and will not affect our society. Question: What if Christians do not accept Muslims as their leader? Answer: Then, we have to divide the country.<sup>51</sup>*

Nigeria fought the civil war in the midst of unprecedented economic prosperity from petroleum. This prosperity continued for nearly one more decade after the war. Today it has all been wasted. The Armed Forces must take the blame since they governed the country for all but four of the fifteen or so years of bounty.

After the war, Nigeria missed a golden opportunity to become a great industrial nation. Gowon's declaration of general amnesty was robbed of its fruit by the fact that it was not followed up by positive effort to reinstate Biafrans in the mainstream of Nigerian life. Instead, a variety of devastatingly punitive measures were taken against those on the Biafran side of the war: The families of war casualties were simply ignored, the bank accounts in Nigerian banks were frozen and all former high-ranking military officers were dismissed. Those on the Biafran side were therefore effectively excluded from the mainstream of national life. They were, at the same time indirectly forced both to begin life from the scratch and to shoulder the immense burden of post-war reconstruction of their homes and businesses all on their own. Nigeria therefore lost the opportunity to make them feel welcome and at home in post-war Nigeria<sup>52</sup>. They remained alienated from the mainstream of Nigerian social, cultural and political life for

a period rather too long for comfort. As a result of this alienation the now legendary Biafran technology that served them so impressively during the war was lost to Nigeria for good as the scientists behind it all quietly went their separate ways.

The situation was exacerbated by the thorny issue of "Abandoned Property" whereby the houses and establishments belonging to Biafrans -- there were a whole lot of them all over the country -- were by decree sold off at token prices to pre-arranged buyers, while it was decreed an offence punishable by ten years imprisonment without option of fine for any previous owner to seek to reacquire it<sup>33</sup>. That strained confidence even further.

Soon after the war, some state governments decreed to take over all schools without consultation with the proprietors, and without offering compensation whatever. Given the fact a good number the schools belonged to the Catholic Church, one is scarcely in any doubt as to the vindictively punitive undercurrent behind the decree and its intended results. This measure sadly shut up without warning one of the most time-honoured and uplifting instruments placed at the service of the emerging Nigerian society. Soon, due to bad management the schools were turned to shambles as neither students nor teachers had any incentive or any challenges that would impel them to perform at their best.

About 1973 Religious Instruction was removed from the school curriculum. By 1976, after such a protracted period without religious instructions the negative results were so evident that people associated the negative traits manifested in students with the absence of religious instruction and began to call for its restoration to the school programme. It was already getting too late as many critics of the Church had taken the time to think things over and decide that religious instruction as practised by the Church was unacceptable to them. They proposed moral instruction instead, but none of the policy-makers seemed to have any clear idea as to the scope of such a programme, or its content, or the methods to be adopted in giving these instruction, or the specific fruits that these instructions were expected to yield. There followed a period of lull as people toyed around with all kinds of experimentation.<sup>34</sup>

In the face of all these facts Nigeria has a great task to restore the waning confidence of its citizens in the system and in one another, to redirect her citizens to the cherished moral values, and while recognizing the importance of religion, to seek ways religion could contribute to harmony in society rather than create division.



The challenge now is to determine what kind of morality is to prevail; whether it must necessarily be connected with religion. In the event of a necessary connection, which religion is to prevail – Christianity, Islam, or Traditional Religion? It is a question without a ready answer. While the question lingers, children are being born and bred in what might be described as a state of confusion. This challenge will not be met merely by finding alternative channels for moral formation; there is the corollary of seeking to establish a healthy moral environment free from destructive contention and controversy. In addition there must be a rational, realistic reappraisal of the contents of Christian, Islamic and Traditional values in order to establish or restore good rapport between them. There are, for instance, some common areas of human and social concern like integrity, human rights, family, marriage and sexuality, human relations, justice and peace, life, and human work. Many renowned philosophers, social theorists, critics and commentators have provided a rich variety of proposals and theories that will enable any searcher find his or her feet.

Happily, Nigeria it is not going to be a question of "starting from the scratch". Nigeria already has a fairly functional school system that only needs revamping. The latest available figures<sup>55</sup> show that as of 1984 the Nigerian educational system had to its credit the following:

Table 4:

[Types of] Schools	[No. of] Schools	[No. of] Teachers	[No. of] Students	*St-Tchr Ratio
Primary (Age 6-12)	38,211	359,701	4,383,487	40.0
Secondary (Age 12-17)	5,498	82,749	3,169,624	38.3
Vocational, Teacher	475	15,738	391,588	24.9
Higher [Education]	80	----	101,558	----

Source: *Encyclopaedia Britannica Book of the Year 1989*, p.671.

\* St-Tchr Ratio = Student-Teacher Ratio.

The chapters ahead will explore from various angles the question of how moral education can be carried out so as to be capable of bringing about an ethical environment in Nigeria. Account will be taken of some of the more important factors - historical, political, socio-cultural religious, ideological, psychological -- in Nigeria's national life that could bring about the desired harmony in Nigerian society.

## Notes

1. English, M.C., An Outline of Nigerian History, London and Beccles: William Clowes and Sons Ltd, 1959, p. 1.
2. *ibid* p.6.
3. The First book to be printed in Yoruba was published in 1850; in Ibo in 1860; and in Efik in 1862. No book in Tiv was published until 1918. Thus written material in these languages can provide information only on very recent events.
4. Few excavations have been done in Nigeria for research purposes apparently due to lack of funds. It has been suggested that as development is stepped up, the need might one day arise due to some accidental discovery resulting from excavations for unrelated purposes such as building and facilities construction. A recent unearthing of a theatre apparently used during the times of Shakespeare is a case in point.
5. English, M.C., *op. cit.* p.26. The question then is, if all these people's trace their origins outside of the African continent, how come that paleontologists claim that Africa is the origin of the human race?
6. *ibid* p.34
7. The Portuguese sailor, Bartholomew Diaz could only land 500 years ago and life in Nigeria was already well-established by that time, probably for centuries.
8. The Arochukwu, later called the **Long Juju** held sway over the Eastern area and beyond for centuries. People consulted it for a variety of needs, but above all, it became the centre for the slave racket of the zone as well as the nerve centre of resistance to colonial invasion.
9. cf Encyclopedia Americana (International Edition), vol 20, New York: Grolier Incorporated, 1987, p.340.
10. In principle those whose parents were *Osu*, or who themselves had become *Osu* had absolutely no place in leadership. They were society's scum and were therefore despised. Such were the people that more readily adapted to the "ways of the Whiteman" and became the Whiteman's interpreters and middlemen. It was therefore logical that the

Whiteman would appoint only whom he knew, and that the people would reject anyone so appointed.

11. Crowder, Michael, The Story of Nigeria, London: Faber and Faber, 1966, p.233.
12. *ibid* p.240.
13. English, M.C., *op. cit.* p.124.
14. *ibid.* p.126.
15. *ibid.*
16. Davidson, P., Old Africa Discovered, London: Oxford University Press, 1979. p.62.
17. Ifemeje, C.C., "Evolution of Nigerian Education I", Foundations of Education, Edited by B.O. Ukeje, Benin City: Ethiope Publishing Corporation, 1979, p.46.
18. *ibid.* pp.48-49.
19. *ibid.*
20. *ibid.*
21. Isichei, E., *op. cit.* p.173.
22. Akusoba, E.U., "The Teacher Outside the Classroom" Foundations of Education, *op. cit.* p.257.
23. Ifemeje, C.C., *op. cit.* p.70.
24. *ibid.*
25. *ibid.*
26. Clarke, P. and Linden I. , Islam in Modern Nigeria, Grunewald, Kaiser: Druckhaus Darmstadt, 1984, p.11.
27. Fafunwa, B.A., History of Education in Nigeria, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1974 p.52.

28. See Alkah, Hamidu, "A Note on Arabic Teaching in Norther Nigeria", in Kano Studies, No.3 (June 1967) p.11.
29. Trimingham, J.S., Islam in West Africa, p.30.
30. Clarke, P. and Linden I., op. cit. p.12.
31. In recent times indigenous African religions have appeared, and they are difficult to classify either as Christian or as Islamic or Traditional, since they manifest various elements in each of the said religions without being tied to any. These differ so widely from each other both in their emphasis and in their teachings that it would be inaccurate to identify the one with the other. Among these religions are the Brotherhood of the Cross and Star, the Aladura, the Eckancker, Godianism, each of which was founded by a Nigerian with an ever-increasing followership.
32. See Metuh, E.I., (Ed.) The Gods In Retreat: Continuity and Change in African Religions, Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1985.
33. Abernethy, D.B., The Political Dilemma of Popular Education: An African Case, Stanford California: Stanford University Press, 1969, p.47.
34. Source: Barret, D.B. (Ed), World Christian Encyclopaedia: (A Comparative Study of Churches and Religions in the Modern World, AD 1900-2000, Oxford, London, Oxford University Press, 1986 p.527. Barret did not say how he came about the figures. The Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1988 Supplement p.671, paints quite a different picture based on its 1980 demographic data on Nigeria: Muslims 45%; Protestant Christians 26.3%; Roman Catholics 12.1%; African Indigenous Religions 10.6%; Traditional Beliefs 5.6%; and Others 0.4%.
35. Williams, H., Nigeria Free, London: Robert Hale Ltd, 1962, p.127.
36. *ibid.* p.128.
37. *ibid* p.97. The discrepancy of increase between the estimated population of the Yorubas and that of the Igbos is no doubt striking. Most Nigerians still believe there are more Igbos than there are Yorubas, but it requires an accurate head-count to clear the confusion. Population statistics for Nigeria are quite unreliable. Before Nigeria's independence the British government conducted population surveys based on tax rolls and arbitrary ratios of persons to houses or cattle. These estimates were accurate enough for pre-World War II needs. However, because

representation in the legislatures of independent Nigeria depended on population, the Nigerian government authorized a general census in 1963. This proved disastrous to political stability. Previous to the census, most observers had accepted an estimate of 37 million persons. The New census surprisingly reported over 56 million. The conflict that arose concerned not the total but the place of residence. According to the *Encyclopedia Americana* (1989 edition, p.337a), the figures in Northern Nigeria were inflated by about 40%, a discrepancy that has been maintained since, with the effect of ensuring for Northern Nigerians a permanent control of the central legislature as well as a permanent advantage in budgetary allocations.

38. Encyclopaedia Britannica Book of the Year 1989, p.671.
39. *ibid.*
40. Isichei, E., A History of the Igbo People, London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1976, p.241.
41. It was the practice of the corrupt politicians to inflate government contracts, sell them to their friends and demand 10% of the total for which receipts were not issued. Thus contracts were over-valued, yet the work was shoddy. Having been "paid off", the politicians were in no position any more to complain about the quality of the job.
42. Isichei, E., *op. cit.* p.243.
43. Soyinka, Wole, The Man Died, London: Heinemann Publishers, 1987, p.177
44. St de Jorre, John, The Nigerian Civil War, London: Oxford University Press, 1972, p.135.
45. Isichei, E., *op. cit.* p.247.
46. St de Jorre, John, *op. cit.* p.136.
47. Federal Republic of Nigeria, Reports of the Constitution Drafting Committee, Lagos: Times Press Ltd 1976, 2:24.
48. In 1981 some 90,000 performed the *Hajj* and each received a Basic Travel Allowance of \$800.00 which totalled \$72.00 million. Each had a return ticket of \$650.00 which totalled \$58.50 million. Of the resulting grand total of \$130.50 million, about 75% or \$115.80 million were paid

from Nigeria's scarce foreign reserves. (cf Chukwulozie, V., Muslim-Christian Dialogue in Nigeria, Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1986, pp.60-610.

49. "Original Communique of Islam In Africa," The Leader Newspaper, Vol XXXI no. 12, Sunday, July 1, 1990, p.6.
50. Newswatch Magazine, Lagos: March 30, 1987, p.14.
51. The Tablet, February 8, 1988, p.192. Gumi's extremist views were interpreted by most non-Muslims as the sign of things to come, and the resolve to make sure things do not transpire that way was firm and irrevocable. Some Muslims, however, dissociated themselves from Gumi's views, even though that did little to allay the fears of non-Muslims.
52. The Banking Obligations (Eastern States) Decree, 1970 was to all intents and purposes a harshly punitive measure against the Igbos. It fully debited all withdrawals made by depositors within the former Eastern Region after the date of secession but refused to recognize any deposits made within the same period. Thus, a withdrawal made from an existing account on say, May 31 1967 counted against the customer, while a deposit made on the same date also counted against him/her. For more on this see Professor Nwabueze, B.O., The Igbos in the Context of Modern Government and Politics in Nigeria: A Call for Self-Examination and Self-Correction, the 1985 Ahiajoku Lecture, Owerri: Culture Division, Ministry of Information, Culture, Youth and Sports, 1985, pp.19-20.
53. The Abandoned Properties Decree, 1979, stated in part that every such sale or disposition "shall be deemed to have been lawful and properly made and any instrument issued by the Committee which purports to convey any estate or interest in land shall be deemed to have been validly issued and shall have effect according to its tenor or intendment."
54. Archbishop (now Cardinal) Francis Arinze aptly described the moral instruction programme in the following words of concern: "*It is no one's religion, taught by everyone, to anyone.*"
55. Encyclopaedia Britannica Book of the Year, 1989, p.671.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE CONCEPT OF MORALITY AND MORAL EDUCATION

*For within her (Wisdom) is a spirit intelligent, holy, unique, manifold, subtle, mobile, incisive, unsullied, lucid, invulnerable, benevolent, shrewd, irresistible, beneficent, friendly to human beings, steadfast, dependable, unperturbed, almighty, all-surveying, penetrating, all intelligent, pure and most subtle spirits. For Wisdom is quicker to move than any motion; she is so pure, she pervades and permeates all things.*  
– WISDOM 7:22-24.

*It would seem, then, that there is no point in the process of moral education where the train of the argument enters a line which is not also a religious line. And moral education, the process of preparation for moral autonomy, is never far away from being at the same time religious education. The reverse is not necessarily true. Religious education will presumably contain some experience of the numinous, man's sense of awe before the mystery of life, which may or may not have moral content.*  
– HAROLD LOUKES.

Before proceeding on any extended discussion of the subject of moral education, it is needful to briefly highlight, and try to explain, the basic recurrent concepts so as to aid the focus of the discussion. By indicating their intended meaning the possibility of muddled understanding or expression would be hopefully minimized in the overall unfolding of the argument.

Among the key concepts are included "ethics", "moral", "morality", "education", and their combination in "moral education". The next step will be to apply the meanings linking the concepts to the task of effective moral education as situated in Nigeria.

#### 1. Morality and Ethics

The term **morality** is closely linked with the term **ethics** such that it is quite difficult to try to distinguish between them. The need to distinguish between them rarely arises, however, and when it does, it is often merely for the purpose of subtle academic or other discussion. In ordinary daily language both concepts are used interchangeably without distortion or loss of meaning. The term **ethics** is derived from the Greek root, the verbal form of which is *e'iotha*, the corresponding noun, *to ethos*. It meant originally "dwelling" or "stall". To this word, *to ethos*, the Latin translation *mos*,

*moris* was given; and from the Latin *mos*, the word "morality" was derived.<sup>1</sup> Ethics in its root meaning therefore has to do with the stability and security which are necessary if one is going to act at all. According to Paul Lehmann, the word was first applied to animals and not to humans, and the germinal idea in the word *to ethos* is the stability and security provided by a stall or dwelling for animals.<sup>2</sup> The verb root *e'iotha* means "to be accustomed to" or "to be wont to". Hence the relationship between stability and custom was a kind of elemental datum of experience. It was really the primary office of custom to do in the human area what the stall did for animals:<sup>3</sup> i.e., provide security and stability.

As reflection upon the stability and security fundamental to human behaviour continued, a certain distinction came to be made between "ethics" and "morality". Diogenes Laertius for example, speaks of ethics as that part of philosophy which has to do with all that concerns us.<sup>4</sup> Ethics according to Diogenes, is concerned with the foundations of human behaviour, while morality is concerned with actual practice or behaviour based on these foundations. Indeed the paramount importance of ethics was evident from the example of the precepts of the philosophers as well as from the customs of living practised by such schools as the Cynics, Pythagoreans and Stoics. And so the word "morality" came gradually to be reserved for behaviour according to reason, that is, reflection upon the foundations and principles of behaviour.

The German language distinguishes between *Sitte* or custom, and *Ethik*, which is the reflective consideration of the foundations and guidance of behaviour (*Tugendlehre*). Ethics is concerned with that which holds human society together. Theophilus Okere explored to great advantage this relationship between custom and morality. Applying the etymology of *mos moris* he focused on the whole idea of *mores*. He drew attention to the fact that the *mores* of a society are the customs and conventions embodying the fundamental values of that society. To reflect this vividly in his discussion he came up with the onomatopoeic Igbo neologism *àmèrè-àlà* – literally, the "maker-of-society"; that which gives society its *raison d'être*.<sup>5</sup>

There seems to lurk within every human being an irresistible but natural proclivity to judge, or assess, or take a stand about anything. This tendency is itself traceable to a natural tendency of the judgment to go for truth, correctness, balance and harmony, at least as subjectively perceived by the individual. I once had the occasion to touch on these natural tendencies in the human make-up when I wrote:



Everyone wants everyone else to behave, to co-operate, to sit up. Everyone wants order and shows concern over instances of disorder. Everyone talks of decency, probity, accountability, honesty, equity, discipline. Everyone sits in judgment over everyone else, and over every situation -- adept at diagnosing and denouncing ills...<sup>6</sup>

Aquinas calls this inner "sense" *synderesis* or the habit of operative reason. According to Aquinas, such a knowledge does not come about by discursive investigation but rather is presented all at once to the intellect. Just as reasoning in the speculative area goes deductively from certain self-evident principles (for which the habit is called understanding), so also must practical reasoning make its deductions from self-evident principles. For example, the axiom that good must be done and evil avoided is arrived at through *synderesis*.<sup>7</sup>

The propensity to judge, whether it is well used, or misused, or underused, is a fundamental factor in any meaningful moral discourse, and consequently in any process of moral education. Moral education's task can be said to consist in trying to establish within the human agent a sense of proportion and balance between all the natural tendencies and right reason, with the latter governing, co-ordinating and moderating the operations of the former. In every area of human action wherever reason is the guide, there is order, restraint, co-operation, understanding, prudence and the like. And where emotions and feelings reign, the chances of acrimony, bigotry, coarseness, glibness of speech and rashness of action are increased.

## 2. The Concept of Education

Education can roughly be described as the process whereby the best in the student is correlated with the best in the educator. The term "education" evokes the idea of a duke (English), *duc* (French), *dux* (Latin); and implies both a status and an activity of leading. (Such cognates conducting, induction and the like underscore further the aspect of "leading" in the nature of education). The blind are led so that they may not stumble; and the toddler is taken by the hand and led along until he is able to establish his own poise. The idea of "leading on" would match an etymology that links education with *educare*, meaning to lead away from.

Many conceptions of education have followed that track by focusing on the educator as the light and guide. Education so conceived consists in a process of instructions

whereby knowledge is *transferred* or transmitted from the educator to the educand. This conception is not without its setbacks for, as Canon F.C. Carpenter points out,<sup>8</sup> no two people agree entirely about the nature of education. Attempts to analyze the subject on the basis of *educare which focuses on the educator* can be more confusing than helpful. Education, he argues, is one of the "consent" words, since no one can be educated in any true sense against his or her consent. Therefore it sometimes seems better that the concept be left unscrutinized, except in so far as we try to make a list of the things which shelter under its umbrella.

It is possible, on the other hand, that the educand can be the point of focus. In this case the meaning of education can be linked with another Latin word, *educere*, to draw out of -- as water is drawn out of a well. Education in this case assumes the meaning of "upbringing", "rearing", "nurturing", "fostering" -- "helping the student to bring forth that which he is already pregnant with."<sup>9</sup> Socrates's reference to himself as a midwife powerfully underscores the element of "drawing out" that is part of the task of education.

Both meanings are not exclusive of each other. They can and do occur together in every situation of education. When applied to the field of moral education the combined meaning is an inculcation of the principles for distinguishing between the right and the wrong, the good and the bad, with respect to human conduct. It also means a nurturing of the disposition to prefer the right to the wrong, the good to the bad, as the norm of action. It is therefore concerned with those principles which, when adhered to in the prosecution of action, have the overall goal of producing good, well-ordered individuals. Since society is made up of individuals within it, a well-ordered society will result when each individual member can be credited with possessing a well-formed character. In a word, moral education is all about seeking to establish a conducive climate whereby human conduct is conformed to the rational nature of man considered in itself and in relation to other realities whether superhuman, human or subhuman. In so far as human conduct conforms to that nature, it is morally right or good; and in so far as human conduct deviates from that nature, it is morally wrong or evil.

It is moral principles that constitute the standards for determining and judging human action. These principles are judgments which, when accepted by the agent become the standards for directing his or her action and behaviour. They are rules or laws governing proper relationships in a given field. The application of these principles constantly and habitually give constancy to human conduct. As William Kelly points

out, moral principles are ethical standards based upon the moral law and, (as the case may be), supernatural revelation, which become the sources for motivation and directing man's conduct.<sup>10</sup> The acquisition and consistent application of moral principles to life's situations are outcomes of the learning process.

The whole process of education, like many a habitual human enterprise, is fraught with assumptions some of which are not subjected to critical scrutiny. James Gaffney observes that in all civilizations people tend to be under the assumption that moral judgment, like other kinds of judgment, is a function of age and experience.<sup>11</sup> Kinds of moral thinking which we consider normal and acceptable in young children, for example, we tend to regard as disgraceful and intolerable in grown-ups. We take for granted, in other words, that there are moral aspects to growing up. We do not suppose that ethical maturity is automatically and inevitably achieved, for it is all too clear that arrested development and delayed development are possible in moral mentalities as in other dimensions of mental life. In other words, time and experience are considered necessary conditions, but not sufficient ones, for the emergence in adulthood of morally mature thinking.<sup>12</sup>

### 3. Morality and Education

From the analysis of the nature of morality Okere gives two meta-ethical definitions of morality: A. the theory of what is right or wrong in human conduct; and, B. the body or system of what is regarded as right or wrong in human action, "and especially what is wrong".<sup>13</sup> The source of this category of right and wrong, he suggests, is possibly due to the nature of man as a moral being, in keeping with his dignity. It is curious to note Okere's emphasis on "what is wrong" as constituting an important part of morality's concern as though it were possible to isolate what-is-wrong from what-is-right. This emphasis creates an artificial dichotomy such as could lead to conflicting theories and therefore to confusion. Besides this dichotomy, Okere's attempt could have gone somewhat deeper and more precise in providing the foundation for a single-, rather than a double-pronged ethical theory.

Furthermore, when one considers the two proposals in the light of the famous chicken-and-egg dilemma of which one came first, they will be seen to be no more than versions of each other. Thus, for example, is it theories that reflect what is right or wrong or is it what is right or wrong that reflects theories? Or further still, could

there be any kind of separation, even if only mental, between right and wrong conduct on the one hand, and theories about them on the other?

Clearly, Okere seems to give priority to theory over action in A., and to action over theory in B., and the two could be said to cancel each other out. A single-pronged approach like that of Kant and most other moral theorists would provide a more sure-footed stance when applied in the field of moral education. In conventional academic terms, A. would give priority to the educator and his or her knowledge and skill, and would favour the transmissory method over any other. B. would be student-oriented and would emphasize the student's ability to discover and analyze things for himself over the teacher's ability to instruct him. It would stress autonomy above other values and favour the Socratic model where the educator is like a midwife delivering a baby.

The alternative proposal would be in line with Kant who gives the term ethics a restricted meaning. He thought it was concerned with motives and intentions of the individual moral agent. At the centre of morality there lay, in his view, the concepts of good will whereby one subjectively wills the action one judges to be right for oneself alone, and not for any ulterior purpose.<sup>14</sup> Since one judges things according to certain parameters, which one did not necessarily define, and since one's actions affect other people, it is obvious that the agent should look beyond himself as point of reference for action, given the fact that an individual's own *bona fide* judgments sometimes prove to be mistaken.

#### 4. Content of Moral Education

One of the most urgent practical difficulties about moral education, especially in its close association with religion, turns on the question, whereabouts in the school does it actually go on? In the past it has been assumed there were two broadly distinguishable elements: There was the conception of the moral learning as coming from growing up in a moral community: the school was to be a moral place, staffed by moral people, sustaining moral rules. Then there was the conception of moral learning as arising from the study of religion. It was a deliberate attention paid to the highest ideals of the human race, a powerfully emotive force towards their acceptance, and some transcendental help towards their realization.

It would now be widely agreed that whatever religious education and moral education are, they are not precisely the same thing. The question is beginning to arise

whether they are not two entirely distinct things. If they are, then there should presumably be two different places for them in the school curriculum, taught by different teachers, with different content and different criteria for success. Experience has shown that it is in no way easy to try and separate them entirely from one another. The two factors seem better suited as companions to each other rather than strangers.

As a matter of pure history, "Christianity" has given the Western world and its satellites a great deal of its moral insight, and some Christians rightly argue that even the modern humanist is living on Christian capital. The same can be said of Islam for those more directly connected with its history. But it is by no means clear that the best way to do morals nowadays is to study the origins of our Christian or Islamic inheritance. It could equally be argued that modern science is a Christian inheritance, indeed western education, literacy itself. But this proves nothing about the content and methods of modern science and modern education. For the Christian or Muslim, "science" is in the end a statement about God; but the Christian doing science does not seek to derive it from his theology.

The Bible or Koran did set out "how men should live and behave", but there is not only one way in which men actually do behave. Modern anthropology has revealed a variety of ways in which men actually do behave, without, apparently, being much worse for it; and certain highly unscriptural activities in some societies strike us as quite attractive. Nigerians, along with peoples everywhere are involved in a highly regulated society, full of specific rules and sophisticated ways of behaviour, to which a biblical morality is difficult to apply. Therefore, even though historically moral education has been interrelated with religious education, it being assumed that God is the author of goodness, religion is not of the essence of morality. It is, in fact, quite possible to distinguish the two things logically. God may demand the good of us, but only if the good has some independent status. If God were not thought to demand the good of us, but rather it was thought that the good is whatever God demands of us, then it would not be clear why we should wish to do the good or indeed be commended for doing it. Robin Barrow and Geoffrey Milburn therefore conclude:

It would be more a matter of power -- to do things because God is powerful and commands it -- than morality -- do this because it is good, a fact that God in his wisdom can see.<sup>15</sup>

Morality is not a neutral term either, but grows out of socio-cultural experience among which is religion, or for that matter non-religion, as a conscious choice. It might

be possible that moral education could be conducted without reference to religion, both through lessons specifically devoted to it and through the medium of other subjects. In the case of the former, moral education would be too abstract and ill-adapted to address experiential situations which arise in the normal process of socio-cultural relations of which religion is an important factor. In the case of the latter, moral education could not claim any autonomy, and would only remain an adjunct to others. Its effect, if any, could only be marginal and indirect.

Education is, admittedly, a preparation for life. As such its goal must be to prepare the one educated not for life in the abstract, but for life as it ought to be lived in any given circumstance. And since morality also concerns social relationships, the special circumstances of each social organization must have a bearing with the goals of morality in that society. In Nigeria's case, it must deal, not with some Aristotelian "natural man", but with Nigerians in the various ways in which they experience pluralism in the country. This pluralism has already been identified in the areas of religious traditions - Traditional Religion, Islam, and Christianity; ideological persuasions -- Humanism, Atheism, Agnosticism, Skepticism; and of economic orientations -- Capitalism, Socialism, Welfarism. Within this pluralist setting they desire to live and operate in harmony.

A further point can be made in connection with religion. Theoretically, morality can be considered to be independent of religion, but in real life situations, more often than not, the moral attitudes which prevail in any living socio-cultural environment is often directly or indirectly influenced by the tenets of the various traditions (including religious ones), operative in that society.

Since education implies promoting understanding, to provide moral education is to give people understanding of the moral domain -- an understanding of the way in which moral language works; in the words of Robin Barrow and Geoffrey Mulburn, "what makes behaviour and people moral as opposed to, say, prudent, popular, or selfish."<sup>16</sup> Being morally educated does not necessarily mean being educated in the empirical, academic sense of the word. It is quite possible to have a sound moral education without having been through a formal school. If that were not so, the implication would have been that the fruit of moral education -- and even morality itself -- would have been the exclusive preserve of those who went through school. It is true, on the other hand, that being morally educated in the true sense does imply having acquired a moral understanding, but it does not necessarily imply being moral or acting morally.

To promote moral behaviour may well be considered an aspect of socialization, and will certainly satisfy one aim of early moral training, which is the cultivation of morally desirable habits prior to any attempt to offer reasoned justification for them.

Humanists and their like are understandably suspicious of any approach which allows any place to religion in state schools under whatever pretext, because they fear that some people might take advantage of it for indoctrination. Mindful of that fear, religious teaching and practices would be integrated into moral education not to provide normative standards but to exemplify the various types of answer which have been given to moral questions. In some instances religious teaching would exemplify moral attitudes which contemporary humanism would wish to commend, like the concern shown in parts of the New Testament for the underprivileged. Even in cases which would offend modern sensibility, like the possibility of stoning the woman taken in adultery, can be used to demonstrate the changing attitudes in contemporary society.

## **5. Approaches to Moral Education**

In general, two main methods are used: the transmissory method and the ethics of principles. A third possibility might be added, namely, a mixture of both. The transmissory method, as the term suggests, is characterised by a handing-on to succeeding generations, of customs and practices of the community. The ethics of principles for its part involves the conceptual analysis of ethical theories prior to their being put into practice. The two approaches roughly correspond to the two types of virtue described by Aristotle -- the virtues of character which come about through habits, and the virtues of intellect which are acquired through teaching. Both methods complement each other in the process of moral education. The one functions by exposing the student to an environment where he or she learns to do by actually doing and by imitating the actions and examples of others; the other for its part would challenge his or her intellect to work out from theories how best to comport him or herself as situations arise.

### **a. The Transmissory Approach**

Being a Christian or Muslim or practitioner of Traditional Religion involves a sharing in a tradition. The tradition often constitutes, in a substantial way, the basis of the morality obtainable within the community, and may have been communicated either directly by word of mouth or indirectly by family atmosphere. At times it may have

been communicated by a whole community's way of life, or by the example of certain individuals\*, or by a combination of such influences.

The tradition of religion or morality does not stand alone, but is usually accompanied by the traditions of criticism. There are, for example, people who want certain things changed or modified in one form or other. There are also traditions of class and regional attitudes -- of sympathy or enthusiasm, or apathy or indifference. Also to be reckoned with are individual prejudices and practices, socio-political circumstances, and the torrent of events, personal, local and general, all of which combine to form the outlook that the individual eventually adopts and personalizes. The word "tradition" does not always refer to past or archaic practices, for there are certain practices that belong to *living* traditions. These have to do with general human attitudes and with respect to timeless and fundamental things that everyone has to face: birth, death, suffering, joy, love, and the whole range of questions about human *being* and *doing*.

The transmissory method finds an extension in the use of fictional characters as well as in parables, fables and novels, where the characters are portrayed for the purpose of putting across some moral lesson.

In some special circumstances, the transmissory approach involves the teaching of precepts -- a code or codes of conduct where do's and don'ts are organized as a guide for moral conduct. The biblical Decalogue is an example of its application in Christianity and Judaism. On the secular level, varieties of codes of conduct are applied in fraternities and clubs. One of the ways of knowing a morally good person is by seeing how far he or she has been able to order his or her life in accordance with the accepted norms of conduct. One who is beyond reproof in this regard is often regarded as an example to be emulated. The life of such a one features as an example of how the demands of norms and precepts are realized in real life.

## **b. The Ethics of Principles**

The ethics of principles provides the grounds for justifying or condemning an action. It can occur either as grounds of objective validity which apply universally in all cases, or it may be construed along the line of Kant's notion of maxims or "subjective principles of volition,"<sup>17</sup> for example, one's personal motto or rule of life. The question arises then as to which principle should be operative in, say, a case of abortion, or

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\*. Refer to the discussion of the Paradigmatic Individuals in Chapter Five.



murder, or suicide, or any such act where an individual's perceived sense of what is right is sometimes at odds with what the generality of people would rather judge to the contrary. Or, further still, whether the validity of an act is solely a matter of consensus. In daily living, because my personal maxims often conflict with those of others, they are usually expected to defer to objective principles especially when it is a question of the common good. An objective principle is a basis for evaluation, invested with a privileged status or authority, quite apart from (my) personal acceptance or non-acceptance of the same.<sup>18</sup> In both cases, however, principles have an important role to play in ethical deliberation. As Aiken points out, their authoritative status is contingent upon the conscientious submission of the persons who adopt them.<sup>19</sup>

Some points of clarification are needed here: to begin with it is not being claimed that the transmissory method and the ethics or principles are by any means the only or even the best methods; it is possible that there are others. Furthermore, the use of examples and the appeal to fictional characters are, strictly speaking, not a class apart by themselves, but seem to be based on the precepts and principles of conduct. Thus they can be regarded more as applications of each other than as separate methods. The reason for treating them separately is because many theorists have treated them separately and one can more effectively comment on their approach if one stood on the same plane. They tend to suggest themselves and evoke each other more readily than they suggest others in any process of teaching.

### **c. A Mixture of Both**

Sometimes the two approaches are taken in combination. For example, in the Catechism of some Christian Churches, the primary purpose is to hand-on to the young or the neophytes the deposits of faith. Yet the same programme of catechesis treats at the same time themes that are centrally theological – God, grace, mysteries, sacraments, salvation – along with themes that are centrally ethical – virtue, guilt, responsibility, sin. And while prayers and other practices are taught (handing on), abstract themes such as those just mentioned are also discussed.

## **6. Nature of Moral Development**

An important aspect of psychological research pertaining to ethics has been its attempt to trace a normal pattern in the development of moral judgment, indicate the

outstanding phases of its growth, and relate these to the kinds of experience which characteristically influence them. Jean Piaget's research points in general to the existence of two distinct levels of moral development. The first level, characteristic of young children, tends as they grow older to be gradually replaced by the second. This replacement often does not take place completely, and it may not take place at all.<sup>20</sup> Piaget's findings were based on children's attitude to the rules of the games in which they are involved. They would typically regard them as deriving from the authority of some superior beings -- whether some older children, or adults or even God himself.<sup>21</sup> They would also typically regard the rules as immutable and inviolable. Thus changing the rules would seem to them unthinkable, and breaking the rules would be assumed to be inexcusable. As they grew older, however, they became more flexible.

In the area of moral judgment, younger children, according to Piaget, attach little importance to the intentions of one who violates the rules, while older children and adults do attach a lot of importance to intentions. On the question of punishment, while younger children regard it as an indispensable and inevitable consequence of rule-breaking, older ones regard it as corrective. Piaget attributes the transition from the immature to the mature level of moral thinking to two basic factors, namely, developmental and social factors.

Lawrence Kohlberg takes up the issue of social and developmental factors, but concentrates on the developmental aspect to the exclusion of the social. He presents a general picture which comprises three levels of maturation in moral thinking -- the pre-conventional, the conventional, and the post conventional.<sup>22</sup> Each of these levels unfolds in two stages, bringing the total to six levels of orientation:

**Level A – Pre-Conventional Stage****Characteristics**

1. Obedience and punishment orientation
2. Naively egoistic orientation

**Level B – Conventional Stage****Characteristics**

3. Good-Boy Orientation
4. Authority and social order maintaining orientation

**Level C – Post-Conventional Stage****Characteristics**

5. Contractual legalistic orientation
6. Conscience or principle orientation

Kohlberg's introduction of the subject of conscience is quite pertinent here for, any effort at moral education must include also the formation of the conscience. It is usually in the realm of the conscience that predicaments are encountered -- **To do or not to do? When? To what extent?** -- in the process of moral decisions.

Erik Erikson sees human development in terms of a cycle, and claims that there is a cycle in individual life as well as that of generations. That implies that as a person gets older he or she becomes like a child all over again, not in the sense of being childish, but that of being childlike. Within the bigger cycle of generations, a later age is prefigured in an earlier one. Erikson's final age of integrity vs despair has the moral and religious connotations of health, wholeness, and holiness. If we are to realize such integration or integrity, we need a "post-narcissistic love of the human ego..., an experience which conveys some world order and spiritual sense."<sup>23</sup>

**7. Moral Development and Conscience**

In numerous instances of living experience, we are confronted with unique situations for which no specified rules of conduct exist. Is the rule, for example, of "You shall not kill" violated in removing an artificial life support for a comatose who does not stand any "reasonable" chance of recovering full consciousness? Is it imputable to risk severe infection that might prove fatal by assisting someone already infected with, say, the

AIDS virus? In such and similar circumstances where opinions are polarized the individual conscience is in a way the court of the final appeal. Basing one's action on the dictates of conscience is said to be to act according to conscience, and the better the conscience is formed the more reliable it is as a guide. A central question with respect to conscience could be stated as follows: If one acts according to a conscience that is in error, does one do well or ill? Can error be corrected, and must it be corrected? A Socratic answer to the first problem would be that no one does evil willingly, and therefore an erroneous conscience is only ignorant of the real issues prior to acting. But that presumes that error of conscience is a permanent and irreversible condition. Experience itself shows the contrary to be the case. Thus one should be able by the help of instruction and other forms of guidance, learn to distinguish truth from error, and pattern one's actions accordingly.

From the earliest beginnings, conscience has been considered to be a purely personal and private affair, yet it is extraordinarily difficult to harmonize with the essentially human task of communication and community, with living, loving, and suffering along with fellow human beings. The essential privacy of conscience is underscored by the fact that even though it might incline us to reach out to others, it could do nothing to bring us into communion with them. In Stoic thought the characteristic privacy of conscience was perceived as a striving towards imperturbability.

Moral theology speaks not only of conscience but also of a just conscience and an erroneous conscience, the voice of conscience, and the like. The conscience is in the realm of the subjective, and as such there is some ambiguity inherent in the conscience as soon as it departs from its own proper and egocentric context. Outside of its egocentric context conscience (since no one's conscience can be applied to another), must express but the personal judgment of the situation and the concrete demands of the situation.<sup>24</sup>

## **8. Moral Education in Nigeria**

Moral education involves, as Otonti Nduka rightly points out, "not only the teaching, learning, and other processes whereby values, rules, principles, ideals, habits and attitudes are inculcated, but also the taking of adequate educational steps supplemented with appropriate institutional arrangements to promote moral growth along the developmental continuum."<sup>25</sup> It is a whole ensemble involving precepts, customs, and

above all, values. The importance Nigerians attach to values, which are the central concern of the education enterprise, is clearly attested to by the fact that one of the objectives of the Nigerian education recommended by 1969 Curriculum Conference was "the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and of society."<sup>26</sup>

It has, since that time been little else than words and worries; not much systematic attempt has been made to identify and foster the right types of values, nor have any appreciable steps been taken to inculcate them. For instance, former Head of State Olusegun Obasanjo declared at Jaji on September 12, 1977: "The Nigerian society as at now, in spite of our efforts since July 1975, is not sufficiently disciplined, fair, just or humane..."

Perhaps the most pervasive of the reactions to the moral anomaly in Nigeria is to attribute all the woes, to the deficiency in moral and religious education in schools, which is one of the end results of the government compulsory take-over of schools most of which belonged to, and were run by missionaries and other voluntary agencies. Nicholas Nwagwu carried out a documentary survey of the arguments for and against the state take-over of schools in Nigeria. Government's explanation was that it wanted to achieve the "long-felt needs of developing a planned and integrated education system which would reflect the goals and objectives of national development."<sup>27</sup> Nwagwu's survey found a general preference to the pre-take-over *status quo* especially for the fact that neither objective seemed to have been achieved since the take-over:

[T]he public generally would welcome the return to the dual control system of education, and in this they had the support of the persistent demand of the missionaries, especially the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>28</sup>

For most educationists the blueprint for patterning moral education can be found in the general pattern with which the school carries out other types of education. The pattern would appeal to the three key areas of learning process — psychological, intellectual and practical aspects of the human constitution. On the psychological plane the school promotes the apprehension of, and intellectual commitment to, norms. On the practical plane, it promotes the development of skills at all levels of operation. And on the intellectual plane, it helps develop the ability for sound and autonomous moral judgments that lead to firm and unwavering commitment to any chosen side of an issue as a result of a good grasp of the crucial questions involved in it.

Considering the Nigerian needs and circumstances, Professor Akinpelu thinks it is essential for proper moral education first to "get to the roots and principles of morality". Thus equipped, the proper climate should be created to sustain it:

We need to know more about morality, about why people behave the way they do, about their moral perception, about the great gulf between moral knowledge and moral action, about anything that can relieve the moral malaise in which we are now... Finally, what I think we need most is the creation and sustenance of a moral environment in the country.<sup>29</sup>

The task of this project, therefore, is to try to enquire as to ways of bringing about in Nigeria and through education this highly desirable moral environment. The school has a crucial role in this task, but certainly not the exclusive role. So long as any form of education is defined solely in terms of school the observer has nothing to study. But if one defines education as the whole process by which one generation transmits its culture to the succeeding generation, then Nigerians -- scholars and non-scholars alike - - can fruitfully and meaningfully embark on the business of moral education. Nigeria enjoys a threefold legacy: from its African heritage, from its Islamic associations, and from its Western contacts. Its best bet is to develop both legacies in harmony with each other wherever feasible.

## Notes

1. Lehmann, Paul, Ethics in a Christian Context, New York: Washington Square Press Inc., 1960, p.23.
2. *ibid.*
3. See note 1 on *oménàlà* in Chapter 3.
4. For more on this, see Diogenes Laertius, Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers, Book I, Prologue par.18; English Translation by R.D. Hicks, the Loeb Classical Library, Vol 184 & 185, New York: G.P. Putnam Sons, 1925.
5. Okere, Theophilus, "The Role of Religion in Moral Education, the Christian Perspective," New Perspectives in Moral Education, Edited by Otonti A. Nduka et al, Lagos: Evans Brothers (Nigeria) Publishers Ltd., 1983, p.52.
6. Onyeocha, Izu M., Enjoy Your Youth, Enugu: Claretian Publications, 1987, p.21.
7. Bourke, Vernon J., The Pocket Aquinas, New York and Evanston: Harper and Row Publishers, 1963, p.99.
8. Carpenter, F.C., "Religious Education Vs Moral Education", Moral Education Vol 2, No. 1, 1970, p.29.
9. Okere, T., *op. cit.* p.52.
10. Kelly, William A., Educational Psychology, Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 4th Edition, 1956, pp.520ff.
11. Plato's philosophy of education seems to work on the presupposition that age bestows a necessary advantage for understanding. Hence his envisioned Philosopher King does not begin to emerge until up till the age of fifty.
12. Gaffney, James, Moral Questions, New York, Paramus, Toronto: Paulist Press, 1973, pp.130-131.
13. *ibid.*
14. See Walsh, W.H., Hegelian Ethics, New York: St Martin Press, 1969, p.12.



15. Barrow, Robin & Milburn, Geoffrey, A Critical Dictionary of Educational Concepts, New York: St Martin's Press, 1986, p.152.
16. *ibid.*
17. Cua, A.S., "The Status of Principles in Confucian Ethics", in Journal of Chinese Philosophy, (forthcoming) 1989-1990.
18. Aiken, H.D., "On the Concept of Moral Principle," in The Isenberg Memorial Lecture Series, 1965-1966, East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1969, p.107.
19. *ibid.* p.114.
20. Piaget, Jean, The Moral Judgment of the Child, New York: Collier, 1962.
21. *ibid.*
22. Kohlberg gives an excellent summary of his own findings, and discusses their implications for moral training and teaching in Moral Education: Interdisciplinary Approaches, edited by C.M. Beck, B.S. Crittenden & E.V. Sullivan, New York: Newman, 1971.
23. Erikson, Erik, Childhood and Society, 2nd Edition, New York: Norton, 1963, p.268.
24. For more on the subject see, van der Marck, William, Toward a Christian Ethic, Translated by Denis J. Barrett, Shannon Ireland: Ecclesia Press, 1969, pp.147-153.
25. Nduka, Otonti A., et al. (Ed), New Perspectives in Moral Education, p.19.
26. This recommendation was endorsed in Section I paragraph 5(2) of the Federal Republic of Nigeria National Policy on Education 1977.
27. The East Central State Policy on Public Education, July 1970.
28. Nwagwu, N.A., "The State Take-Over of Schools in Nigeria: A Controversy", The Journal of Educational Administration, Vol 17, No., May 1979, p.76.
29. Akinpelu, J.A., "Value in Nigerian Society", in New Perspectives in Moral Education, p.48.



## CHAPTER THREE

### CONTENT OF

### TRADITIONAL MORAL EDUCATION

*Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties.*

– JOHN MILTON, *Aeropagitica*.

*Conduct will not be right unless the will to act is right; for this is the source of conduct. Nor, again, can the will be right without a right attitude of mind; for this is the source of the will. Furthermore, such an attitude of mind will not be found even in the best of men unless he has learned the laws of life as a whole and has worked out a proper judgment about everything, and unless he has reduced facts to a standard of truth*

– SENECA.

When Theophilus Okere defines morality as *òmèrè-àlà*<sup>1</sup> -- that which enables society to function properly<sup>2</sup>, he hits precisely at the definition of the various aspects of behaviour and social activities that are acceptable as desirable. Also included in this concept are those actions and attitudes that are rejected as undesirable. While Christian and Islamic moral codes point to some form of revelation for their origins, Nigerian traditional moral code is built up from the injunctions of the earth goddess *Ala* (for the Igbos), and through the ancestors *Ndichie* or *Ndibunze*<sup>3</sup>. These injunctions made up of approved observances and prohibitions, constitute what the Igbos call *omenàlà* -- *the ought* of the land. Those prohibitions are referred to as *Nso-àlà* -- actions abhorred by *Alà*. In this traditional code, there is emphasis on group morality rather than on individual cultivation of goodness itself, and the most important element is the idea of Life as the highest good.<sup>4</sup>

One is accounted as *Onye aruru-àlà* -- a perpetrator of abominable things; or *onye uru-àlà* -- one in the business of doing abominable deeds -- when one does things disruptive of the socio-cosmic order. *Uru-àlà* or *aruru-àlà* therefore pertain to the realm of action that is already performed or could possibly be performed. On the other hand, when one is reckoned as evil in one's general disposition, one is described as *Ajo mmadu* -- an evil person. The concept of good is expressed by the word *mma*. The same word expresses the idea of beauty, health, order. The antonym is *njo* (adjective *ajo* , which expresses the idea of something evil, bad, ugly, unseemly.

In traditional moral code, prohibitions seem to outnumber positive injunctions. The few positive injunctions gravitate largely around religious duties, observances and rites. These must be properly observed for the enhancement of the Good Life, which is regarded as constituting the supreme good.

A communalistic outlook is very prominent too, and stems from the people's world view. Professor Ilogu suggests that because of the emphasis on the community, its well-being, and its ordered existence, the maintenance of the proper links of relationship in human kinship as well as in the relationship between humans, nature, and the ancestral spirit, most members of the traditional society do not readily see the value of goodness for the exercise of personal responsibility. Goodness is seen primarily as a means of realizing the social morality of the group, and this is capable of removing from moral life the joy of inner motivation. It is inner motivation that is of the essence of responsibility.<sup>5</sup>

An inevitable question that arises with any group-oriented morality is whether it is capable of bringing about a sense of personal responsibility which manifests itself in the feeling of guilt or of exultation. There is every likelihood that it would be based on the sense of shame. On the other hand, the sense of having done well will be based mostly on public opinion. According to Milton Singer there is no scientifically demonstrable reason why in group-oriented morality -- heavily influenced by the community's rigorous enforcement mechanism including shame and taunting, improvised, denigrating songs -- members of such groups could not develop inner remorse or guilt.<sup>6</sup> Thus it is not a question of either/or; the two elements are substantially present in the system.

## **1. Traditional Nigerian Moral "Code"**

No written moral code existed in traditional Nigerian society for obvious reasons of lack of literacy. The moral laws were generally conventional, and specific legislations were made to cater to specific needs. Professor Ilogu, however, was able to put together a set of twenty-four injunctions and prohibitions that could serve as a residue of the morality that regulated, and in many cases still regulate, both the conduct of the individual members of the community and the entire community as a whole. The following are the twenty-four injunctions put together by Professor Edmund Ilogu:

1. Stealing of yams either from the barn or from the farm.
2. Homicide.
3. Incest.
4. A freeman *diàlà* having sexual relationships with an *Osu* (one dedicated as slave to a deity), or spending the night especially with the *Osu* in his or her house.<sup>7</sup>
5. Suicide, especially by hanging.
6. Poisoning someone with intent to take his or her life secretly.
7. Theft of domestic fowls especially a hen in her hatching pot where she can easily be taken along with her eggs.
8. A woman climbing a palm tree or kolanut tree, especially if she does so with a climbing belt called *ètè* .
9. Theft of any kind committed by an *Ozo* titled man.
10. Adultery by a wife -- (not by a husband!).
11. A wife throwing her husband down on the ground in the course of a domestic row.
12. Deliberately killing or eating any totem animal\*; if accidentally the liability is more benignly regarded but the act is abominable all the same.
13. Deliberately cutting the tendrils of young, growing yams in another's farm.
14. Secretly altering land boundaries, especially during the night.
15. Wilful arson.
16. Divulging the identity of the masquerade -- especially if the offender is a woman.

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\* Totem animals include the sacred or royal python, sacred cows, goats or rams associated in one form or another with the communities origins or destiny.

17. A woman breaking confinement by cooking and serving meals during her menstrual period, especially if the husband is an Ozo-titled man.
18. A widow having sexual relationships while still in the period of mourning her dead husband.<sup>a</sup>
19. Dying a "bad death" -- that is, death resulting from an infectious disease like leprosy or small pox, or dying within one year after having sworn an oath<sup>b</sup>.
20. A husband deliberately breaking or throwing away his wife's utensils.
21. A cock crowing at an awkward time in the night<sup>c</sup>.
22. A woman giving birth to twins. (The practice of tabooing twins has long ceased!).
23. A baby delivered "feet-first" rather than "head-first".
24. An infant cutting the upper teeth first.<sup>9</sup>

Many important features could be noted by looking at these rules of conduct. First of all, they cannot be called societal laws in the sense of regulations established by the people for the smooth-running of the community. The reason for this is that no one could claim authorship or even knowledge of the precise origins of these rules of conduct. A typical member of the community, say an elder, will explain their validity by saying: "That is what our forebears and their own forebears practised since the beginning of time. Anyone who goes against them does so at his or her own risk."<sup>10</sup> The sanctions apart, whatever they are, one would like to know the reason for, and authority behind them wherever they apply. Conformity for its own sake is in itself clearly not a sufficient vindication of the agent's status as a rational and autonomous agent. Its moral import could only be at best marginal.

Secondly, in general no one took any personal offence at the breach of any of these laws. Rather it was the community that took action against offenders. The more serious breaches were said to be offenses against *Ala*, the earth goddess, on whose behalf maximum

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<sup>a</sup> Perjury in traditional society is akin to the biblical unforgivable sin and anyone guilty of it was denied the normal courtesies of mourning or a decent burial.

<sup>c</sup> That is, between the hours of 8 p.m. and 5 a.m. which was supposed to be the business times of the spirits and the ancestors. It is the height of impudence to disturb them.

stiff penalties were inflicted on offenders. The land has always been there since the beginning of time and is technically considered eternal and inviolable.

Thirdly, there is a cyclic interplay in the universe of beings among the superhuman, the human and the subhuman, and the human is always at the centre. Even though the human concerns are at the centre the principle behind these ethical generalizations is in base cosmological in as much as it covers the entire spectrum of beings, rather than anthropological in the sense of limiting itself to rules that are meant to guide human conduct. In this connection the rules affect even domestic animals (see number 21) as well as crops in the field.

Fourthly, sequel to this is the lack of direct reference to the divine element which might lead to suspicions of the lack of a teleological explanation. The masquerades are about the only reference to the superhuman element, since masquerades were considered to be the revered spirit of the ancestors come back to earth. Furthermore there is in most traditional explanations a constant reference to *Ala*. This reference besides providing some justification, also introduces the teleological explanation often sought in ethical determinations.

Fifthly, religion does not show up directly either; it seems to be only presupposed. This presupposition is demonstrated by the fact that a breach of any of these injunctions would attract sanctions of a religious nature by way of expiatory or purificatory rites. The conclusion one may draw from this is the fact that morality and the religious sense are so inextricably bound together.

Sixthly, these laws or rules appeal to the heart rather than to the intellect. That is not to suggest that they are irrational. Rather, their validity depends not so much on their ability to persuade the mind as in their functionality in maintaining order in the community. In this respect one may be justified to regard them as intuitionist in character. The general attitude with regard to the traditional moral code is to challenge one not just to take-it-or-leave-it but to take-it-or-face-it.

A closer look at the twenty-four injunctions would reveal a great deal of emphasis on justice and equity. Hence the many prohibitions against stealing (numbers 1,7,9,14), and vandalism (13,15,20). While the stealing of a fowl was considered a disgrace of the most debasing kind, the stealing of yams was a very serious offence because the yam stands as a mark of masculine achievement. It could be compared with one stealing another's hard-won Olympic medal. By far the most demeaning was for a titled man to steal, since the conferral of an *Ozo* title amounted to a universal acknowledgment of one's integrity of life. The lesser the worth of the object stolen the greater will be the attendant opprobrium.

Prohibitions against murder come out strongly (2,5,6,15) and include both suicide and attempted murder such as poisoning and arson. Also coming out strongly are prohibitions against sexual impropriety (3,4,10,18). Sexual activity, which by its nature procures some bodily pleasure, was rightly considered inappropriate during the period of mourning, since it showed lack of respect for the memory of the deceased. When it is said that the rule of abstinence applied to women it does not mean that men had a free ride. Because of the polygynous, rather than polyandrous, nature of marriage in traditional Nigerian society, a woman had only one husband to lose, but a man had other wives he could turn to. Where the man had only one wife, he would be obliged to observe the period of mourning and the abstinence from sexual activity that went with it.

Allied to these are prohibitions against a woman climbing trees or serving meals when she should be confined. The former was considered to be in bad taste and offensive to the beholder because the anatomical structure of the female body was considered ill-suited to the hazardous activity of tree-climbing. The latter was purely due to hygienic considerations.

Divulging the identity of a masquerade was considered abominable. It amounted to blasphemy -- saying that the masquerade was a human being when it was actually taken to be the spirit of the ancestors. In the Bible Jesus considered blasphemy one of the sins against the Holy Spirit "which can be forgiven neither in this world nor in the next."<sup>11</sup> A woman guilty of this was doubly liable of overreaching and impropriety. Since women were not supposed to approach the masquerade in the first place, she could not have ordinarily got to know. Therefore she could only have known illegitimately by going out of her way to find out. There lies the impropriety.

A Western reader of 22,23,24, is sure to find them rather surprising. What may seem excessively brutal can be better appreciated if one considered the logic behind them. In 22, humans are supposed to be unique and single. Only animals come in multiples. To get into the human race in multiples was considered as demeaning to the human nature and as introducing the bestial element in the human forum. This was unacceptable.

It was a bad omen for a child to come feet-first. That was considered the exit rather than the entrance posture. One exited the human community feet-first when his or her body was being carried out of the house for the last time. A child coming feet-first was an omen of death and disaster. The head touching the ground first was taken as a sign of humility and loyalty, while the feet hitting the ground first was a sign of rebellion and intractability.

To cut the upper teeth first was considered bestial, for it reminded one of the fangs of deadly serpents, tigers and lions, and such domestic animals as cats and dogs. It was also considered to be an omen of avarice and wrangling. In the name of peace and harmony and in deference to the perceived order of the universe, these phenomena were viewed with foreboding and "normal" people had the duty to forswear them. There is an Igbo proverb that clearly shows this resolute disposition: *Nwata puo eze-elu ma a-kpopeghi ya, o ga epukwa ozo* = If a child cuts the upper teeth first and you do not knock them out, he is likely to do even more unseemly things.

Professor Ilogu's was a brave attempt to put together on paper what previously existed in people's collective memory. Hopefully he will have the occasion to refine his collection by showing more clearly the fine tunes in various aspects of the "code", and make it more comprehensive to cover the details of daily living. It will then be easy to translate it into basic material for formal education, reflection and criticism. As the code stands, it is based on the natural law and the demands it makes on the individual are a take-it-or-face-it.<sup>12</sup>

In other parts of Nigeria, there are different points of emphasis, but the principle is the same. S.F. Nadel studied the situation among the Nupes of Northern Nigeria. According to him, law in the Nupe kingdom is a concern of the political organization, and forms part of the elaborate coercive machinery of the state. Forms of redress and sanctions exist, and are applied outside the political framework. This restricted form of redress covers two types of offenses: religious offenses and kinship offenses. The former includes such acts as the desecration of sacred objects or places, whether Islamic or traditional, while the latter include litigation over inheritance, and offenses against traditional marriage rules. Among the most common such offenses are marriage in the forbidden degrees of consanguinity and incest.<sup>13</sup>

Traditional Nupe law operated with legal distinction which, corresponding in certain respects to the modern distinction between civil and criminal law, defined two classes of delicts: simpler delicts *Gyara*, which were settled by "repairing" the damage that had been done, and graver delicts, which called for formal judgment and punishment - *Sheri'a*. The following table summarizes the various crimes and offenses according to this twofold classification:

**Offenses Involving *GYARA*:**

1. Small debts.
2. Minor thefts carried out during the day.
3. Theft of fowls, sheep, and goats.
4. Adultery: seduction of a girl by a man who is willing to marry her.

**Offenses Involving *SHERI'A*:**

1. Large debts
2. Theft on a small scale and during the night.
3. Theft of cattle or horses, and all theft committed during the night.
4. Adultery leading to fights and bloodshed.
5. Seduction by a married man who refuses to marry the girl.
6. Murder and Manslaughter.
7. Highway robbery.
8. Arson.
9. High treason, ie, rebellion of feudal lords against the king – *Lèse-Majesté GI TOKO NYA TSU*, literally abuse of the king.<sup>14</sup>

The first set of offenses was a matter for the local authority, while the graver crimes were referred to the central authority – the court of the king and *Alkali* in Bida. Punishment of ordinary criminals was performed in the capital, in the open market and might range from flogging or *shela* to capital punishment.



## 2. Sexual Morality in Traditional Nigerian Society

An important point that requires some discussion is the question of sexual morality. In traditional Nigerian societies sex was not a subject to be glibly discussed. It was, in fact, considered remiss for adults to discuss matters regarding sexuality either with or in the presence of the young. By the same token it was unthinkable for young persons to make references to sexual things to the hearing of their elders. Whatever they needed to know about sexuality was casually told them as was warranted by the unfolding of their own physical and sexual development. At the onset of puberty, for example, the adolescent would probably complain of some ache or pain or physical distress. The parent would understand the connection and instruct him or her on how to cope.

It was not uncommon in the past that young maidens went about their daily business without clothes on until the time of marriage. Boys also went about their daily activities without clothes on until they were officially "clothed" in a special ceremony initiating them into adulthood.<sup>15</sup> It was at the initiation stage that anything a young initiate ever wondered about was frankly and directly explained, since he or she would in a short time need to apply them in the course of his or her adult and marital life that would soon follow the initiation. The Efiks, Yorubas, Igallas, Igbos, Fulanis, Igallas, practically all the peoples of Nigeria had their own versions of the initiation process.

Contrary to the impressions created by the earliest European and other foreign nationals to witness this state of affairs, there was no pornographic intent involved in the scantiness of clothing. On the contrary, the humid climatic conditions rendered elaborateness of clothing unnecessary as a protection against the weather, and even less so as an ornament. Thus even in Europe and the rest of the industrialized world, hot summers have led to various degrees of scantiness in clothing and even at times to a state of complete unclothedness.

In traditional Nigerian society, the moral standards were absolute and parents had an absolute control over their children -- male and female alike. The boys played and interacted among boys while the girls played and interacted among girls. That removed unnecessary occasions for temptation. Where a boy or girl was in a state of sexual restlessness, it became embarrassingly manifest to any casual on-looker. In traditional society, sex was not to be indulged in for the pleasure of it even though the craving might be there. The element of pleasure was considered as incidental rather than central to the course of human mating. As a result sexual promiscuity rarely, if at all, occurred. Society was very strict, and anyone indulging in promiscuous activities earned the scorn of the neighbours.

It was probably this strictness about sexual matters that led S.M.E. Bengu to assert that all sexual perversities were alien to Africa<sup>16</sup>. These perversities, he insists, "have been imported into Africa through the cities with the whites as their carriers, since they were the creators of the cities themselves."<sup>17</sup> This assertion, though somewhat an overstatement, is likely to be endorsed by most African purists. One need only consider the degree of tolerance accorded to certain sexual practices in industrialized societies, and which are almost unmentionable in more traditional society. On the other hand, however, Bengu fails to define just what constitutes a sexual perversion, especially for the fact that there is no unanimity in the issue, just as there is no strict homogeneity in African cultures. Besides, he never tried to show how he came about his conclusion.

Flora Nwapa, a leading Nigerian lady novelist, discusses the issue of prostitution and rejects it as bad for the African woman. In her novel *Idu*, the heroin of the novel by the same name denounces prostitution outright: "Our woman of the Lake, (i.e., the Sea Goddess), frowns at it, and that's why prostitutes of our town never profit by it."<sup>18</sup> The Woman of the Lake is also the goddess of virginity, and is said to punish prostitutes. Idu drives her point further: "If prostitution is to be practised let it not be native women, but women of other lands to practise it."<sup>19</sup>

Professor Wole Soyinka, Nigeria's Nobel Laureate for Literature, depicts a scene where the traditional sexual morality is given expression. A grandmother brings pressure to bear on her grand-daughter Dehinwa not to abort a child she evidently seemed to have conceived whether in or out of wedlock, whether for cosmetic or any other reason:

You were plump when you first came back from "*ilu oyinbo*". (She looked up sharply, boring into her eyes, then shook her head in relief and mischief). No, she chortled, I don't think so. But listen girl, I know this new habit of you modern girls, don't join them in the foolishness. If you are expecting a baby, have it. A child is a beautiful thing; have it. The important thing is to know the father.<sup>20</sup>

Dehinwa is here not being encouraged to be promiscuous, but rather to face up to her conduct. If by accident or design she had conceived a child, she should not seek to escape by the back door. Here was an emphatic objection to any contemplation of abortion. Progeny was to be preferred in all circumstances above personal convenience or cosmetic considerations. Thus a woman's womanhood was assessed by her actual ability to bear children.<sup>21</sup> Where she was unable to bear children, her esteem waned.

Another Nigerian writer, John Munonye, touches on the predicament of a woman that failed to bear children. In his novel *Obi*, a friend, Warrior congratulates Obi, the hero of the story, on his Marriage to a well-bred and beautiful wife. Nevertheless, Warrior wastes no time in declaring his stand on any woman who fails to bear children: "We could never call her wife until she has produced children for the family; for what use is a kolanut tree if it fails to bear fruit."<sup>22</sup>

A similar attitude finds expression in the case of Flora Nwapa's Idu, who was so unhappy over her inability to be a mother after three years of marriage. Of her it was said. "She was not pregnant, she had not even had a miscarriage. She was, like any woman in traditional society, meant to be a mother and not a mere sex object."<sup>23</sup>

Within marriage itself, adultery, especially on the woman's part, was highly condemned. Men were not thereby given a blank cheque. They could, as has already been shown, meet their sexual needs from their several wives, and if they had only one wife, they were expected to remain faithful to her. The only exception to the rule is in the case of concubinage.<sup>24</sup>

### 3. Traditional Moral Education of the Young

James Hake points out that the factors that affect the moral training of children in Northern Nigeria (and other parts as well), were the customs, practices, and religious beliefs of parents<sup>25</sup>. Children were required to show their parents and elders prompt obedience and respect, and an unquestioning submission to their will. The belief is that if one were to be too lenient in training the child, he or she would bring misfortune to him or herself and his or her family. According to traditional and religious beliefs, a child is born imperfect, and if given his or her own way, he or she will do foolish and harmful things not only to him or herself but to other people as well. Parents therefore felt it was their bounden duty to try to curb the incipient evil tendencies in their children, and to use corporal and other punishment as they saw fit<sup>26</sup>.

In addition to the small but recurring misdeeds of children which would irritate parents, stealing and then lying were considered serious negative character traits. Quarrelling, fighting, tardiness, rudeness, disrespect for elders, breakage of family utensils, are other types of misbehaviour which would cause parents to use disciplinary measures on them.

The most common form of punishment was thrashing, and in many cases it was often preceded by a good scolding. In some extreme cases of breach of discipline or persistence in obstinacy, the child could be locked up in a dark room and temporarily denied access to his most cherished belongings and playthings. Sometimes he or she would be denied a meal. The idea was to let the child see the full impact of his or her conduct. Most children would break down and cry, and that was considered an act of contrition that would earn them reprieve. It was left to the parents to determine just the right measure of strictness that would not border on cruelty, but they would prefer to be "cruel to be kind."

These traditional methods were thought to have been quite successful in maintaining discipline. In the light of present-day sensitivities, they are likely to be criticized as trials by fire. It is arguable whether it was not after all a case of parental sadism and child abuse which did no more than impose compliance rather than real, spontaneous obedience. Could acts of compliance be reckoned in terms of virtue as acts resulting from a developed and autonomous judgment or are they mere conditioned responses to stimuli? If the former, it is all well and good, but if the latter, the children's autonomy or capacity for virtuous action becomes at best severely impaired and at worst permanently distorted.

John Kambalame and his companions put together a clear-cut code that gave specific directives to specific groups in the community – children, adults, parents, marriage-couples.

They were meant to provide relevant instruction for various stages of development -- initiation, marriage, family, and society in general. Though designed for Kenya, Uganda, Malawi and other East African countries, the contents are very relevant to Nigeria. The details may vary but the substance is basically applicable.<sup>27</sup> It has all the makings of a social catechesis.

When the time of initiation came the children were gathered together, taken into the remote forest and away from their parents and exposed for the first time to life in its most rugged and most challenging state. The boys would experience for the first time what it meant to be their own men beyond the protective shadows of parents, and under the strict supervision of one skilled in the job and designated to guide them. Their food would be simple and their shelter would be the barest possible. There was no question of the boys feeling "crushed" or "punished" by the experience. On the contrary, their punishing experiences were meant to "prove" to proud parents, peers, and prospective female admirers, that they could hold their own in tough conditions and difficult circumstances. The "tutor" or mentor would proceed to explain the significance of every object and action so that the boys would understand perfectly what they were doing and why. Then they would be issued specific instructions which they were supposed to carry out.

### 3<sub>1</sub>. Male Initiation

#### a. Explanations For Lads 12-14 at Initiation

Twelve- to fourteen-year olds are taught as follows during the course of initiation:

1. The porridge they are bringing here for you has this meaning: that you belong now to your own group; that you have set out on a journey.
2. These ceremonies mean that when you were small you played about as you felt inclined and held off from the disagreeable things.
3. The cruel leader of *vinyau* symbolizes those trials in life that you will meet with in the world; if you go on childishly such things will come to you from this side or from that.
4. That blindfolding of you means that there will come to you troubles that the eye does not see, such as illness, trials, and death; things that can take you unawares.

5. Making you part company with your mother means putting modesty between you and her, because you and she are not alike in your physical parts.
6. This little temporary shelter here signifies the grave where you will lie without seeing any one of the people of your village.
7. Your sponsor signifies the spirits who will stay with you among the dead, and who, when the time comes, will present you to *Mulungu* [God the Just, Upright, and Immutable], accompanying you as witnesses to your good character.

**b. Injunctions to the 12-14 year Old Lads During Initiation**

1. Be obedient and do gladly all that you are ordered to do.
2. Honour all who are older than yourself.
3. You must always particularly help those in need and especially such as are aged, the lame ones, and children. Never deride, never revile, never strike them.
4. Be ready to fetch and carry wherever you go.
5. Honour your father and your mother for all the good things they do for you in looking after you here on earth.
6. You must love *Mulungu*, who looks after the spirits of the dead, and make offerings of worship to Him.
7. You must always speak what is true.
8. Take nothing belonging to another -- without asking for it.
9. Never entice another man's wife.
10. Have care of your body day by day.
11. Eat nothing that is stolen.
12. Be amiable to everyone.
13. Always be busy at your work.
14. Be kind to all created things such as dogs, cats, frogs, lizards.

**3., Female Initiation: The *Ofosi* Guild**

There is also a special initiation for females. It is the initiation into the female priesthood -- the *Ofosi* Guild among the Owe people of Kwara State of Nigeria.<sup>28</sup> As a rule,

the traditional religion of the Owe is an affair completely controlled by the adult male section of the community. Women and children are practically of no importance, just as they have no direct say either in the other decisions concerning the well-being of the tribe. A significant exception to this general rule in the religious sphere is the phenomenon of *Ofosi*. They are women who are initiated into an esoteric and deeply religious society, involving periodic and authentic spirit-possession.<sup>29</sup> They are considered the "wives of the Ebora", and unlike other women who have no active role in the Ebora cult, they have some specific though limited part to play in the worship of Ebora. Their part consists mainly in singing and dancing in honour of the Ebora on the appropriate occasions such as the major religious festivals: Eye, Oka, and Ekiho; for the promotion of a man to the *Orota* grade; the funeral of a member of the *Orota* grade or his mother, or that of one of their own number.

The rite of initiation into this cult occurs only when there is a suitable spiritual atmosphere in the town, generally on the occasion of the promotion of a great chief, or the burial of an important priest-elder. As soon as the atmosphere is declared propitious, parents who have daughters and husbands with wives they intend to dedicate in this way to the *Ebora* take the necessary steps with the directors of the guild to have the prospective candidate enrolled. A woman, too, may decide on her own to get initiated, but she has to obtain the permission of her husband who then puts forward her name.

On a given day, the head of the *Ofosi* calls down the spirit. She performs secret rituals involving palm oil on the sacred pot of the *Ofosi*, and calls out the names of the candidates. As the names are being called into the sacred pot of "medicine", the *Ofosi* spirit gets into the candidates wherever they may be. They suddenly begin to experience serious pains in the head, fall into a trance and rush into the bush -- generally up into the Ebora hill -- for days.<sup>30</sup> After some time, the *Ofosi* women go in search of them, and bring them to a sort of novitiate.<sup>31</sup> Here as the blood of a sacrificed goat is poured into the sacred pot, they regain consciousness and begin right away the long period of elaborate initiation, divided into three stages.

The first stage consists in three months of complete isolation. In Olle, this used to be spent in the depth of the forest. Then comes a further three months of communal life in the premises of the *Oba Ofosi* -- i.e. the chief of the *Ofosi*, during which time they learn the language of the *Ofosi*, songs and ritual dances under very rigid discipline and seclusion. At the last stage, again a period of three months, they leave the seclusion, go around in small groups performing the ritual dances they have learnt from house to house, and begging for food and money.

The candidates at this stage came often into the town, "very scantily dressed, with a small piece of cloth that just about went round the waist, and stopping far up above the knees".<sup>32</sup> Their bodies were smeared with red *osùn* or ochre; the upper part of the body was completely bare, except for beads swung around the neck, and many others not inelegantly piled on the waist. Since they had, so to speak, just been born to a new life, "they behaved like children in speech and mannerism, and were even called *Akiyeye* or *Akitata* which means 'mad' or 'moronic'" <sup>33</sup>.

Though strictly cultic, the *Ofosi* has a lot of features in common with the initiation rites already described. There is a common interest in the esoteric, in the need to retire "away from the crowd", rigid discipline, reference to a leader or guide. The end result of cultic "regeneration" is also noteworthy. The initiates emerge as "new creatures" untrammelled by the banal habits of the world around them. Henceforth they are no longer ordinary people, but must be referred to in quite special circumstances.

The scantiness of dress makes them no one's object but relates them more to the spirit world than to the world of sense, since at the very beginning of the ceremony they were taken possession of by the spirit. They had learnt to make-do with whatever they could; to endure isolation and terror; to survive in tough circumstances; to keep secrets and the discipline required for learning and using an esoteric language, esoteric songs and dances. Using Saint Paul's expression, "It is no longer [they] who live" [and operate] but the spirit who lives in them<sup>d</sup>. Their actions and attitudes in that state are completely adapted to the promptings of their possessing spirits.

The fact that a new name is imposed on initiates is very important. Names in traditional Nigerian culture express the very personality of the bearer, and the taking of a new name is a significant expression for the fact that by initiation, the *Ofosi* has become a new person. In the Old Testament of the Bible, God changed Abram's name to Abraham; Jacob's name was changed to Israel; and in the New Testament Simon became Cephas or Peter, and Saul became Paul.

It was a great honour to be made an *Ofosi*. The *Ofosi* women were held in respect by the local people, and a husband (who had to pay the expenses) considered it an honour to have an *Ofosi* as a wife. The hand of girls who became *Ofosi* prior to marriage were highly sought in marriage, for it was generally conceded that an *Ofosi* woman was more trustworthy, obedient and moral than other women, and it was rare for an *Ofosi* to try to leave her husband.

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<sup>d</sup> The entire citation reads: "I have been crucified with Christ and yet I am alive; *it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me,*" (Galatians 2:19b-20a).



#### **4. Special Post-Initiation Instructions**

After initiation, the lads as well as the lasses among the initiates were basically ready for the marital stage of life. Special instructions and hints were offered them about successful family-craft and mother-craft as they were gradually eased into the family life of their own. The parents, too, had their own sets of instructions about the most helpful attitudes to adopt towards their upcoming son or daughter and the spouses they might have chosen for themselves.

##### **a. To the Parents of the Young Lad**

1. Never tempt or try your child needlessly.
2. Care for your child most watchfully as he comes to his full maturity.
3. Your child has left your hut and sleeps in the lads' hut now with his contemporaries, but never say that he has left you.<sup>34</sup> Care for him as usual.
4. If you see that he is late in coming home to his hut, ask him about it: he has sense and will tell you.
5. Be patient and forgiving with your boy. As he goes out with his equals (ie peers), he will get into trouble and you should rescue him and forgive as well as console him.
6. Remember to watch over his health. Give him medicine when he is not well.
7. Do not forget that as he grows up, he will do what you did. Desire will come upon him to seek for a wife so that he may build a household for his very own.
8. Now that your lad is one who eschews such-and-such things, never knowingly give him what he should not have, lest he sin.

As the boy develops into adulthood and takes a wife in order to start his own family, there was a set of instructions for him, for his wife, and for their various parents:

**b. To A Newly-Wed Husband**

Listen, Oh husband: you have lived with your father and mother. They brought you to birth, they nourished and fed you, they clothed you and looked after you well until you matured, right up to the point when you desired and sought a wife. Today here is the wife that *Mulungu* has given you. She is also just as yourself: she has lived with her old folk who brought her to birth, fed and cared for her, as was the case with you. Today, you note her beauty and, desiring her, have caused her to separate from those people of hers, so that she may be truly yours. You ought to pay heed to my words; but to hear them and to act by them:

1. You must bear affection to her with the whole heart.
2. You must care for her, even as her own people did.
3. Let her want for nothing.
4. You must seek the medicines for her, should she be ill.
5. If you want that people should have you and your wife in esteem you yourself should esteem her.
6. Do not forsake her for another.
7. Honour her parents and her friends.
8. Love your wife's relatives as your own, and be obedient to them.
9. Never despise your family and fellow-villagers.
10. Continue as you have been, that you bring no cause of separation between your father's people and those of your inlaws: so that both may be made one large community through you.

**c. To a Newly-Wed Wife**

1. You must love your man.
2. You must listen to what he says, and do it.
3. You must have that care for him that his parents had.
4. You must be friendly to your husband's guests as with your own and those of your own people.
5. You must not leave your man and love others.
6. Honour the parents of your man and all his kin.
7. Let your kindly feelings for your husband's circle be as if to one large community with your own people.
8. Defend your man from any frightening things which are within your knowledge.
9. Never despise parents or kin.
10. Continue as you have been, that you bring no cause of separation between your father's people and your in-laws, that together they may be one, single, large community.

**d. To the Parents of Newly-Weds**

1. Love your children and guide them rightly in this their home.
2. Honour their household, that others too may honour them.
3. Listen to their troubles and help them with their difficulties.
4. Do not be the cause of unhappiness in your children's home life.
5. Unite your own home with that of these your children, so that you will make one large community together.
6. Hasten to their aid whenever they complain in any sort of trouble.

There are some important features that manifest themselves in this code. More than anything else, it concentrates on the family unit and could easily pass as a set of instructions for successful family living. There is great premium on forming a large community (b.10, c.10, d.5). For this reason the individual gets little or no consideration. The ideals of unity and reciprocity in rendering honour and respect run through very strongly. The ideal of solidarity in times of trouble is another of these important features. Lacking, however, are injunctions of a religious character, a sexual ethic, and some guideline for social interaction. The deity is

only sparsely, if not indirectly, introduced. All these are important elements that could not safely be ignored in any serious attempt at moral education.

## **5. Methods of Traditional Moral Education**

Even though there were no systematized, formalized, school-type methods of moral education, educators in traditional Nigerian society had at their disposal a variety of tools for effective moral education. By far the most pervasive was emulation, by which the educand learned to do things by actually doing them. The educator accomplished his or her task by a repeat-after-me approach. This was the way of apprenticeship. It was applied in practically every field of endeavour -- professional, recreational, educational. Thus one learned to be a herbalist or fortune-teller by actually being an apprentice to an already accomplished herbalist or fortune-teller, and doing as the master craftsman would direct. The same applied in learning a new dance or song or game. Besides apprenticeship other approaches included the use of stories and fictitious characters, the use of proverbs, riddles, aphorisms and other words of wisdom, and the so-called "negative way" of caution and prohibition. Though generally arranged to cater for various stages of development, they are by no means isolated from each other. Their effect is supposed to be cumulative rather than occasional. I shall attempt to say a bit more on each of these methods.

### **a. Learning By Doing: Apprenticeship And Emulation**

The quick Nigerian child learned not only from his or her parents but even more by using eyes and ears and all his or her faculties. Children were not isolated from the activities of their elders. There was no baby-talk in the home; parents talked to their children as though they expected them to understand normal adult speech. They also expected them to behave in the normal manner within their level of development. There were things which were supposed to be avoided: there were words, gestures and demeanours which were considered to be in bad taste for any young person to adopt. The child saw how his or her parents, elder brothers and sisters behaved towards each other, towards strangers, or seniors or those of the opposite sex and was expected to imitate them. In instances not previously clearly defined, it was through their manifest approval or disapproval of certain things he or she did that the child was able to know if they were right or wrong, permissible or impermissible. In general, the great facts of human life and the origin of things were introduced into the child's mind by means of his or

her incorporation into the daily activities. It was the manner rather than the amount of instruction that was of prime importance.

In their initiation ceremonies, Nigerians showed themselves to be good, practical psychologists. They knew that the child was very impressionable and therefore took every measure to ensure that the impressions children received at initiation were so strong and positive as to serve as a beacon in their later life. At the appropriate time, the boys were taken away into a camp by themselves and isolated from the villagers. No woman was permitted to enter the camp.<sup>35</sup> The same was true of the girls, too, and males were not allowed into their camps. It was important to maintain an atmosphere of seriousness and mystery as a safeguard against levity of mind. Special costumes might be worn and men representing terrifying monsters (i.e., masquerades) would confront the boys at most unexpected instances. The aim was to teach them courage and resilience in the face of the fearsome, the unusual and the unexpected. The initiates were subjected to the severest disciplines and would emerge as "new" beings -- strong, brave, confident and courageous -- having overcome fear, infantile dependency and timidity.

#### **b. Use of Stories**

It was a common practice in traditional Nigerian society that the family gathered to tell tales which illustrate human activity and the consequences for good behaviour as well as the penalties for misconduct. Moral lessons were often drawn at the end of each story. Sociological facts were illuminated in the same way to explain the origins and consequences of divorce, murder, incest, friendship, courage, treachery, etc. Edwin Smith reflecting on the content of African stories credits them with moral and religious content that go a long way to forming the young people's attitudes towards their environment.<sup>36</sup>

Stories are moulders of ideals, since they inculcate a high code of social ethics of excellent quality for their ability to combine the provision of entertainment with the provision of moral lessons. Another important feature of the stories was the high degree of participation they engendered. Since the tale was combined with song and the teller acted as soloist, the participants had the opportunity to take the refrains. Often, the audience was questioned by the story-teller when a character had to justify the behaviour he manifested, and interpolations of assent from the audience as the tale unfolded were regularly heard. Edwin Smith gives his assessment of the instructive value of African tales:

African tales not only amuse and express feelings; they are educative... In recent years, the educative value of story-telling has come to be recognized among ourselves. By educative I mean: parents have always realized its value in practice. Tales are seen to be the natural forms for revealing life; the natural carrier of racial tradition or information and ideals. They are declared to have two functions: they are a moulder of ideals; and they are an illuminator of facts.<sup>37</sup>

The following two stories illustrate the use of tales to draw moral lessons as well as achieve other educational goals:

### **Story I: The Bride with Stained Teeth**

A certain father found a bride for his eldest son and sent him off with the bride-wealth to bring her home. As they were returning, the girl began to sing: "I am a beautiful girl, but I have no teeth." He looked into her mouth and was horrified to find a black ridge where the teeth should have been. And he took her back to her father and claimed the return of the cattle he had handed over.

On hearing what had happened, the second son went to get the girl, for he thought that his brother must have made a mistake. But once again on the road the girl sang her song, the black ridge was revealed and she was rejected with scorn. Then amidst the jeers of his friends, the youngest son of the family set out to try his luck. He handed over the cattle, and on the road the girl sang her song again.

When He looked into her mouth, lo! the black ridge, and he knew his brothers had not been mistaken. But he acted differently. "Never mind," said this magnanimous, or less fastidious young man, "Let us go on." They came to a river, and as they were crossing he seized her, told her to open her mouth, and he scrubbed her mouth vigorously with sand. To his joy the black came away and beneath there shone a set of beautiful, white teeth. The father reproached his son for wasting good cattle... But to his delight and to the utter chagrin of the brothers, the girl smiled and showed that her teeth were as beautiful as the rest of her comely person.

At the end of a story like this, participants were invited to give their reactions and share any lessons they could draw from the story. A wide-ranging variety of lessons could be drawn from the story. A few samples will illustrate: heaven helps those who help themselves; do not cry with horror over a bad situation, do something about it; better light one candle than curse the darkness. On the negative side: a girl's beauty is severely tainted by carelessness over the rules of hygiene; a little diligence enhances about anything. Since everyone was expected to come up with his or her own lesson deriving from the story, passive listening would be

completely out of the question, since no one would like to be exposed to the ridicule of others for inability to draw a simple lesson from a story.

Another important feature which adds to the merit of this method was that each participant was able to view the story in accordance with his or her own experience and situation and everyone benefited in the end from the sharing. A final point here is that each person's appraisal subtly revealed his or her own kind of psychology and would help those around to understand and appreciate him or her more.

The foregoing story has been a contrast between the good, the better, and the best; between judgment and prudishness: between practical resourcefulness and lethargy. We shall consider another brand of moral lessons -- not the contrasts of opposites this time but the awareness that through co-operation, virtues can and do complement and enhance each other. On the other hand they could hardly stand in isolation from one another.

## Story II: Who is the Hero?

A certain man had five children, four sons and a daughter. Sometime after his death, the daughter disappeared. The mother called the sons together and set them to finding their sister. They were remarkably gifted men. The eldest was able to see things at a very great distance. On casting his eyes around he discovered his sister fifty miles off in the clutches of a lion. The second brother had the power of transporting himself through space unseen, and he rescued his sister from the lion's claws.

On missing his prey, the lion went rampaging about, but the third son killed him. The girl was brought home dead; and the fourth son, by virtue of his powerful medicines, restored her to life. The mother was overjoyed, and taking a large piece of meat she gave it to her sons, saying: "Eat, my sons. I give it to you in gratitude for your cleverness and faithfulness." But the brothers said: "No, give it to only one of us -- the one who did most in restoring our sister to you, safe and sound."

The brothers in the story pass all tests and have shown themselves to be optimally-formed, well-disciplined characters. They co-operate in solving the problem using the best of brain and brawn. None tries to claim the credit to himself alone. When their shrewd mother tests them for vanity they come out in flying colours by throwing their mother's challenge back to her. They are not about to accept rewards for doing what they consider to be their bounden duty towards their sister. Their preoccupation is to save their sister, and having successfully accomplished that there was no point in getting lost in such trivialities as fighting over a piece of meat.

The two stories make use of fictional characters and fictional circumstances that are in some respects true to life and in other respects unreal. The important issue is not the verifiability of the facts of the story but the applicability of the principles behind the actions and attitudes of the characters depicted. In many stories of this instructive nature animal characters are often used and given human roles and human words. In that way the message is graphically delivered without the risk of anyone taking it as a personal affront.

At the end of each story-telling session each child had a home work to do, namely to pester a parent or uncle or any senior person to teach him or her a new story for the next day including the moral lessons and the responsorial songs that usually accompanied and punctuated each story. Apart from the formalized, customary overtural greetings the story-teller built up self confidence and at the same time drew the attention of the listeners by posing a series of rhetorical, aphoristic questions to which the audience were expected to respond *Mbà!* (i.e., an emphatic No!).<sup>38</sup> Such questions involved truisms of daily experience like whether the most skillful climber ever attempts climbing an *ópètè*;<sup>39</sup> whether Fish ever gets drowned in the river; or Frog ever trips in the mud; whether one could crack a nut with an egg; whether the weight-lifter ever lifts the ground; or the child in the womb ever speaks, etc. These aphoristic one-liners were an important tool used in highlighting moral impossibilities, or rather, moral improbabilities. They were designed to sharpen the moral sense of the little ones by drawing attention to the folly of one who would attempt the impossible or the inadvisable. The simple principle being demonstrated by them is, in a word, *that one should know oneself, one's limitations and possibilities, and act within the realms of possibilities rather than exposing oneself to the folly of attempting the ridiculously impossible.*

Children would from time to time in the course of play and interaction intone a whole range of such aphorisms with their friends chorusing the second half of each. In traditional society it was a mark of erudition to be able to invoke strings of apt aphorisms to match any point of discussion. More importantly people seize the opportunity of even seemingly inconsequential occurrences like sneezing, to reaffirm their rule of life or what might be called a secular creed. Upon sneezing, those around will say the equivalent of "bless you!", but the one who sneezed will proceed with a barrage of "spontaneous" affirmations of a rule of life called *ìjù-ógù*<sup>40</sup>.

In many ways the casual but effective process of internalizing and applying the content of these aphorisms without the stress associated with formal school work, has something to say to Western formalized methods of inculcation of ideas. By effortlessly invoking the appropriate



"principle" to match a given situation, a child manifests a thorough grasp of the principles, their implications and their connections with one another with respect to daily moral determinations.

### c. Use of Proverbs and Riddles

Intimately related to folk tales are proverbs and riddles. The moralizing aspect of the tales is expressed in the terse statements of proper behaviour appended to them, often as the culmination of the action, but sometimes only as an admonition that seems to have but little to do with the sequence of events leading up to it. Riddles, for their part, while not a part of the tales, form the prelude to story-telling sessions, where some of them are usually "pulled up" as a brain-teaser to sharpen their wits for intelligent and participatory listening. A few examples will illustrate:

- Question:     What is it that tortures you even while your parents  
                    look on?
- Answer:       Hunger.
- Question:     What happens to the fly that could never be advised?
- Answer:       He is buried with the carcass.
- Question:     What happens to the despot to whom no one dares  
                    make a suggestion?
- Answer:       He could never be informed when his ceremonial  
                    clothes are soiled.

The use of proverbs involves an interesting methodological point for, while it is not difficult to record a long series of these short, pithy statements, it is quite different when one attempts to discover their significance. This can be achieved only by employing the technique of question-and-answer, where a hypothetical situation that seems to be in accord with the meaning of a given saying is presented to the informant, and then varied until the addressee is able to identify the understanding that most accurately reflects the meaning of the saying in the particular instance.<sup>41</sup> Proverbs are used to warn, to admonish, to reprove, to guide, to praise, to encourage. Facility in their use is a mark of erudition and elegance in speech. They reflect more clearly than other forms of folklore the deepest-set values of the people, showing the drives that motivate behaviour and controls that regularize the relations of an individual to his or her fellows. Here are a few samples:

1. Just one soiled finger and the entire hand will be rendered soiled. (Warning about the social implications of misconduct).
2. If the ear persistently refuses to hear, when the head is cut off, the ear goes with it. (Admonition against obstinacy).
3. When one resembles what he is caricatured with, laughter becomes irrepressible. (Reproof against foolishness of conduct).
4. A child is never scalded by a piece of yam given him by his mother. (Exhortation to trust and confidence).
5. When one is told to "keep it up", it means that his or her work is being appreciated. (Compliments for action performed).

These proverbs flow freely in the course of daily speech and conversation. One is expected to understand them by applying them in the context. Some, however, are highly charged with meaning -- sometimes ironical, sometimes cynical, and sometimes humorous. The addressee must do the homework him or herself and apply the message accordingly. The wise person will draw the lesson, the foolish will fail to see the point. Here are some examples:

- i) **"The lazy man eats little"** is used to chide one who is eating heartily, but who had earlier refused to work.
- ii) **"When an oil-palm nut is eaten in a hurry, ants get the lion's share"** is used to back to reason one given to precipitous actions.
- iii) **"Taking out with one hand and replacing with the other keeps the store stocked for tomorrow"** is a thoughtful reminder for injudicious spending or use of things.

An important feature that renders such proverbs effective in driving home the moral message is, as has already been shown, that they could be attributed to an animal or even an inanimate object such as Tortoise, or Lizard, or Python -- anything whose characteristics could demonstrate the point being made. If the addressee chooses to take offence, let him or her refer to the animal quoted.

In style, Igbo proverbs employ terse and archaic terms for maximum effect. Such archaic words as *ògòrì*, *ògòdò*, *nnékólóchìe*, *úmù-nnadi*, are preferred to the more modern equivalents of *nwányi*, *ákwà*, *óké-ìbìrì nwányi*, *ndi-mmádù*, and mean respectively woman,

clothing, old woman, and people. Thus the truant child is often warned: *"Nwátà a nághì àgbáláhá mbèmbè yá n'ósó"* – no matter how fast or far a child tries to flee, he could never outrun his buttocks. That means that one's task, though unpleasant could never be escaped by flight. (In contemporary language *mbèmbè* or buttocks will be expressed by *"íkè"*).

When one manages to pull through some personal difficulty in spite of a neighbour's refusal to help, the former is likely to declare as follows: *"Ihé á wòrò nwányi à gbáálá n'áhíá"* -- literally, what a woman has been tantalized about has glutted the market, i.e., what was vaunted as being beyond anyone's reach has turned out to be something commonplace. The preference for archaic terms is dictated by the need to strike the chord of antiquity with the attendant authority it lends the principle being invoked, and to show that it was there before the speaker referred to them.

#### d. The Negative Way of Caution

Victor Uchendu points out an important method of instilling traditional morality through deterrence from laxity. He observes that Nigerians "tend to wash their dirty linen in public." Thus the fact that all eyes are watching and all tongues are ready to wag, places a strong check on people's tendencies to laxity. When women quarrel, for instance, they mercilessly expose each other's follies and foibles -- as they might have gathered from local and domestic gossip. Yelling at the top of their voices they narrate with graphic details each other's darkest sides. Uchendu calls this a transparent orientation, and anyone who would not have his or her sins told in the market place had better watch his or her conduct.<sup>42</sup>

The negative way, though prevalent at the level of speech is not limited to speech alone; it applies also at the level of action and daily living. In daily social interaction, for example, foods and drinks are tasted by the host prior to their being offered to a guest. This is to show that they are free of any harmful contents. The host thus manifests his or her good will in first tasting what he or she has to offer. Not to taste a victual before presenting it can be construed as not to vouch for its wholesomeness. More importantly, to refuse something offered even after it has been tasted speak volumes about how the hosts moral, social and spiritual standing has been perceived by the guest. Usually words are not required to make the point.<sup>43</sup> Anyone that must enjoy the confidence of those around him or her must be seen to be beyond guile. It goes beyond an individual's clear conscience. A clear conscience must manifest itself in ways that are identifiable by the community or it is as good as no conscience at all.

The concept of the good life is so built on transparency that the individual would dread anything with the potential to bring about shame or loss of face in any form. It is the people

that give praise or blame and they base their judgment on what they know see, hear, or in any way perceive about a person's external conduct. Thus the major deterrent of crime, concludes Uchendu, is not guilt-feeling but shame-feeling.<sup>44</sup>

## 6. Conclusion

Traditional moral education in Nigeria has been able to provide comprehensively for all facets of human conduct and inter-personal relationships. It may lack the complexity and sophistication of the nuclear age, but its very simplicity has been its great strength. In its pure form, it has been free of the assaults of casuistic rhetoric that has characterized many modern ethical theories. The theories are often criticized. Barry Williams and Donald MacKinnon, for example, in their book *Soundings*, claim that a great deal of what Christians often call virtue, on closer inspection turn out to be cowardice.<sup>45</sup> Paul Tillich speaks of the moral law as too intolerable to be borne. John A.T. Robinson criticises the idea of moral laws which come down direct from heaven and are eternally valid for human conduct.<sup>46</sup>

Considered from those points of view, both the Judeo-Christian decalogue and the Kantian universalism of moral law will be found to be in instant trouble. Hegel would argue that nature and the moral agent are governed by separate sets of laws. In his view nature has no concern with moral consciousness, and the moral consciousness has no concern with nature. Nothing matters to the moral consciousness except its own inner purity. The moral agent, nevertheless, has to act and carry out purposes in the world, with the result that he cannot dislocate himself from the world altogether, but must in some measure at least subordinate it to himself.

J.D. Mabott goes further to argue against the Kantian universalism: he insists that universalization produces a self-contradiction, since no new rules would be possible. According to him, if everyone said what was false, no one should expect the truth and so no one could be deceived. Therefore, "universal lying" is a self-contradiction, and so would be universal stealing.<sup>47</sup>

## Notes

1. Okere, Theophilus, "The Role of Religion in Moral Education", in New Perspectives in Moral Education, edited by O.A. Nduka and E.O. Iheoma, p.52. Etymologically the term omere-ala can be broken down into *òmèrè* = maker of; that which constitutes; and *àlà* = literally the soil or land; but in this instance it signifies human society.
2. Okere's interpretation while significantly differing from the common usage of the term *òménàlà* is not necessarily contradictory to it. *Òmèrè-àlà* or "maker-of-society" would refer not to the order of material but that of efficient causality in the Aristotelian sense. It is "that-which-puts" human society on its way by giving it the nudge it requires precisely to be human. Okere's interpretation is therefore quite in order. On the other hand it will be a mistake to consider the common usage *òménàlà*, in its literal sense of "what-obtains-in-society", "what-thrives-in-society". That would limit it to the merely conventional sense of practices of whatever type and rob it of its primary meaning of "the-ought-of-society". It is thus a value-studded system of mores, ideals and standards that undergirds the people's behaviour. Therefore its role in society is in the order of final causes: that which confers on human society its *raison d'être* precisely as a human society. It is this meaning that gives the term *òménàlà* the crucial place it has in the moral education of the people.
3. Ilogu, Edmund, Christianity in Ibo Culture, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986, p.123.
4. *ibid* p.128.
5. What Ilogu seems to suggest here is that the Igbos separate duty from the realm of virtue, almost in line with the Kantian idea of duty for the sake of duty. This point of view, though plausible, is quite debatable. A detailed discussion of its deeper implications is, however, not within the scope of this exercise. Since the sense of achievement is highly cherished among the Igbos, one who falls short of this ideal could hardly expect any esteem in society.
6. See Piers, Gerhart and Singer, Milton B., Shame and Guilt: A Psychoanalytic and Cultural Study, New York: W. Norton & Co., 1971, p.99.
7. The question of *Osu* and *diala* distinction is steadily losing importance. People now mix more freely without ever bothering to find out whether the ancestors of their friends were *osu* or *diala*. And it does not make much difference in the relationship if they turn out to be the former.

The twilight of the *osu-diala* institution has arrived. The last hurdles will have been surmounted when the marriage barrier is finally broken. It is social pressure more than anything else that prevents most people from seeking to marry across this social barrier. A few have tried it though especially among the born-again Christians and charismatic groups. Practically no one believes in the deities anymore.

8. A widow was considered to be in ritual danger until she had performed the cleansing rite, normally after one calendar year. Indulging in sexual relationships was considered a blatant act of indiscipline and one capable of spreading pollution in society.
9. See Ilogu, Edmund, op. cit. pp.125-126. The twenty-four "commandments" as described by Professor Ilogu have been slightly rephrased in some cases for the purpose of clarity and for the benefit of a reader not familiar with the issues covered.
10. I had the occasion to hold hours of discussion of the real import of these injunctions with some very senior citizens of my home community. These people lived through the traditional society as well as the present. They were always glad to draw useful contrasts sometimes nostalgic and sometimes with gratitude for the changes. Up to the 1930s and 1940s these laws were largely intact. Among the people I talked with were Nze Agwulonu, Samuel Asagwara Njoku, Peter Chima, David Nwachukwu, and my father Raphael Onyeocha Chukwu. These were very knowledgeable people. Most of them have now passed away in their eighties. The explanations that follow are a fruit of the insights gathered from the discussions that spanned from 1977 through 1987.
11. Jesus' opponents cynically attributed his miraculous deeds to the power of Beelzebub the Prince of Devils [Mt 12:24-27] and he reproached them for attributing the work of God to the agency of the devil.
12. The Laws of nature presuppose the author of nature itself with whom there is no discussion or dispute, but before whom there is to be unquestioning obedience.
13. Nadel, S.F., The Black Byzantium, London: Oxford University Press, 1981, p.165. The incest taboo is still very strong in contemporary Nigeria. The Western legal system would recognize marriage as valid within the third degree of consanguinity but in most parts of Nigeria so long as any blood relationship could be traced between the prospective intendeds, marriage would not be permissible, and sexual union would be considered more or less incestuous according as the relationship is close or remote.

14. *ibid.*
15. This state of affairs has long ceased to be in vogue.
16. Bengu, S.M.E., Chasing Gods Not Our Own, Natal, Republic of South Africa: Shuter & Shooter Pietermaritzburg, 1975, p.72.
17. *ibid.*
18. Nwapa, Flora, Idu, London: Heinemann Publishers, 1987, pp.34-41.
19. *ibid.*
20. Soyinka, Wole, The Interpreters, London: Heinemann Publishers, 1987, p.106. Cosmetic slimness was not particularly appreciated in Nigerian women. Preference was for the plump, rounded figure that was considered evidence of good living. Lanky women were thought to be the nagging type who, because of ceaseless inner conflict of soul were unable to derive proper nourishment from the food they ate.
21. "A woman shall be saved by child-bearing", wrote St Paul to Timothy. *1 Timothy 2:15.*
22. Munonye, John, Obi, London: Heinemann Publishers, 1987, p.99.
23. *ibid.*
24. It was possible for women to have concubines, especially if they were widowed. This was not reckoned as adultery. The concubine provided for the woman, maintained her hut, did the masculine jobs in her farm, and was a source of emotional and physical support and protection. If any children resulted from the liaison they bore the deceased's name and not that of the concubine. For more on the phenomenon of concubinage in its institutionalized form see Victor Uchendu, "Concubinage Among Ngwa Igbo of Southern Nigeria," Africa, vol XXXV No.2, April 1965, pp.187-197.
25. Hake, James M., Child-Rearing Practices in Northern Nigeria, Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1972, p.39.
26. *ibid.*
27. See Kambalame, John, et al, Our African Way of Life, Translated by Cullen Young & Hastings Banda, United Society for Christian Literature, London & Redhill: Lutterworth Press, 1946, pp.48-54.

28. See Ade Adegbola, E.A., (Ed), Traditional Religion in West Africa, Ibadan (Nigeria): Daystar Press, 1983, pp.34-45.
29. *ibid.* p.34.
30. *ibid.* p.38.
31. *ibid.*
32. *ibid.* p.39.
33. *ibid.*
34. At about the age of 7 a boy was considered too old to remain an inmate of the parental hut. See Kambalame, note on p.50. This is hardly surprising since in traditional Nigeria, once a child was up to seven years of age, he was almost treated like an adult and would often be brusquely reprimanded for misconduct: "You are not going back to your mother's womb, are you?" It was not uncommon to procure wives for 9 year-olds who gradually grew into it.
35. See Instructions for 12-14 year old lads number 5.
36. Smith, E.W., Knowing the African, p.138.
37. *ibid* pp.157-158.
38. For the sake of a foreign reader, I will reproduce the first few lines of exchange exactly as they are used. The story-teller (S) begins by calling on the participants' (P) attention the same way as a fan solicits a roar of support by shouting "Hip-hip-hip!" which promptly draws the response: "Hurray!"  
  
*S: Takwru chee!* (This means nothing specifically beyond the onomatopoeic sound that draws a response).  
*P: Eèh!*  
*S: Takwru chéè!*  
*P: Eèh!*  
*S: Ote elu o na-ete ópètè?*  
*P: Mbà!... etc.*
39. ópètè is a flimsy, pulpy, leguminous reed that crumbles under the slightest pressure. The accents are here supplied to aid pronunciation.
40. See Chapter Seven for details on *tjù ógù*.



41. See Ottenberg, Simon & Phoebe, (Ed.), Cultures and Societies of Africa, New York: Random House, 1960, p.452.
42. Uchendu, V.C., The Ibo of South Eastern Nigeria, New York, Chicago, London: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1985, p.17.
43. The host should draw his own inference. If he feels he has been misunderstood he could either approach the host and explain himself or invite the neighbours, state his case, and make a public declaration of his innocence of any wrong doing or bad intentions. Following his declaration special ceremonies are performed that restore communion between him, his former host, and the community. (Woe to him, however, if his declarations prove to be false, for his ostracism by the community would become total!).  
 The usual reasons for rejecting such victuals range from the host being perceived as guilty of either double dealing, tendency to perjury, known tendency to apply poisons in foods for those he disagrees with or fears or hates, scandalous living e.g. being associated with incestuous conduct. (This includes any sexual activities involving people of the same village since people of the same village are considered blood relations and are not supposed to be sexually involved with each other.
44. *ibid.*
45. Vidler, Alec, (Ed), Soundings, London: Cambridge University Press, 1962, p.81.
46. Robinson, J.A.T., *Honest to God*, p.106
47. Mabbott, J.D., An Introduction to Ethics, London: Hutchinson University Library, 1986, p.39.

## CHAPTER FOUR

# MORAL EDUCATION FOR NATIONAL COHESION: PROBLEMS AND RESOURCES

*No man is an island, intire of it selfe; every man is a peece of the Continent, a part of the maine... any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankinde.*  
—JOHN DONNE, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

*I do not know the method of drawing up an indictment against an whole people.*  
—EDMUND BURKE, *Speech on Conciliation*.

### 1. Role of Moral Education in National Cohesion

Moral education has a role to play in achieving national cohesion especially if it incorporates within its content the ideals that the country stands for. By focusing on the ethical elements of the political life, and by being thoroughly informed regarding the basic principles for which the country was constituted, it will dispose the students to work for unity and co-operation.

Moral education inculcates the spirit of goodwill and understanding in at least three ways: First, it helps the people acquire the right information and understandings essential to constructive and dynamic citizenship. Second, it offers the parameter for assessing human behaviour thereby freeing people from cynicism and unfounded speculation. Third, in its application, moral education teaches people how to get along well with others and how to understand them rather than censure them. These things it can accomplish by teaching moral principles as well as by drawing moral lessons from the historical, political, religious, social and economic experiences of individuals and communities in the country. It will highlight the ideals to be pursued and the errors to be avoided, in order to emerge as a strong and prosperous nation.

In the school, moral education helps to create the right attitudes and dispositions needed to translate the factual information received into action. Students are thus enabled to explore individually and collectively how they could contribute to national understanding and harmony. Furthermore, it also develops in the students sensitivity to

the feelings and opinions of others. Emotionally, spiritually and intellectually, the students develop genuine interest in what goes on not only within their local communities but throughout the entire country. The well-being of the country and all citizens thus become a significant factor in their lives, and they develop the disposition to commit themselves wholeheartedly to the ideals and promises of a united and peaceful country.

## **2. The Problem**

Nigeria did not start off as an organic whole but as an agglomeration of nationalities brought together by a colonial fiat. The task now is to turn this artificial creation into a cohesive, coherent entity. While the British ruled Nigeria, their policy was never directed at creating a common national loyalty. Since their primary loyalty was to the British Crown, they were more interested in consolidating British authority. They established one system of law throughout Nigeria to enable them govern the whole country effectively. As a further measure towards ensuring effective government, they imposed English as the official language in the hope that ethnic loyalties would gradually dissolve into, and be supplanted by feelings of a national loyalty well suited to the British interests. This hope has met with but partial fulfilment. Nigerians are still known by their distinctive dress, facial and other tribal markings (where such exist), various languages, distinctive social, religious and cultural traits. When these differences are emphasized, the centre could hardly hold.

The problem in Nigeria can be described as one of a polarity of interests. This polarity manifests itself in centrifugal ethnic tendencies; inter-ethnic rivalry; tensions arising from disparities in socio-psychological well being; differing religious attitudes; the lack of a common national language; and contentious educational policies.

### **a. Centrifugal Ethnic Tendencies**

Nigeria has paid a high price for unity in terms of the Civil War where more than two million people lost their lives. The Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970) has been referred to by many as a war of Unity.<sup>1</sup> Yet two decades after the war, unity still seems to be eluding Nigeria. The states are as distant and polarized as ever. Religious, ethnic and political bigotry seem to increase by the day and, above all, disagreement as to where the problem lies has made it impossible to agree as to what the solution would be.

As the national crisis brewed in 1966, General Ironsi's attempt at a unitary form of government cost him his life<sup>2</sup>. Much as Nigerians talk of national unity, it is quite surprising to note that few have the disposition for it. Ethnic loyalties are much stronger than national loyalties. In a most revealing survey carried out by Margaret Peil in 1973, the psychological stonewalling between the various groups was shown to be still strong. For her survey Peil chose the heartland of the major ethnic areas, apparently supposing that they would be typical: Ajegunle (Lagos) for the Yorubas, Kakuri (Kaduna) for the Hausa-Fulanis, and Aba (Imo) for the Igbos.<sup>3</sup> These three ethnic areas -- often cynically referred to as the *Big Three* -- are at the centre of the ethnic rivalry in the country. Peil's survey revealed that in Lagos 14% of the Edos, 14% of the Efik, 100% of the Hausa, 50% of the Igbo, 79% of the Tiv, 57% of the Zugu interviewed would like to live with Hausas; 36% Edos, 29% Efik, 0% Hausa, 7% Igbo, 7% Tiv, 14% Yoruba, 86% Zugu, will have nothing to do with Hausas. For space we shall not go into the distribution for the Yorubas and Igbos but suffice it to say that the pattern is exactly the same.

#### **b. Inter-ethnic Rivalry**

Another great problem is the ethnic rivalry among the different groups. Each ethnic group resents the ascendancy of any other. The ensuing rivalry is due to a number of factors.

1. The sharing of the limited resources of a country towards which states and ethnic zones feel but little or no spontaneous affection or obligation. The award of scholarships, the provision of roads and water facilities, and all that might be called social rights, have become the attributes of the ethnic groups rather than that of the central government.
2. There is a new bearing in the definition of one's group identity. Traditionally, most Nigerians aspired to the level attained by their neighbouring ethnic groups. Now the wealth acquired by a neighbouring group is often perceived by rival groups as an unfair "share of the National Cake". Every group wants its own chunk of this "cake".

3. The new civil arrangements have often upturned traditional patterns of power relationships between neighbouring ethnic groups and introduced new expectations and struggles for political power. Dynastic rulership enjoyed by some people in some parts of the country has become suddenly threatened by the power of the vote in the new system, and the possibility of being voted out of office fills the incumbents with misgivings. Many of them would consider it in their best interests to maintain the parochial *status quo* rather than submit to widening of bases that would diminish their influence.

A clear indication of this sense of unease can be shown in the penchant for using the threat of secession as a bargaining chip. In 1954 the Yorubas openly hinted about the possibility of secession and indeed pressed for a secession clause in the Constitution of Nigeria. In 1956 and again in 1966, the Hausa and Fulani leaders also threatened secession. As already shown in Chapter One, the coup that brought Gowon to power in 1966 was said to have been a secession coup which was discouraged by the British Government. That was why the main plotter, Murtala Muhammed reportedly backed out of it leaving Gowon to go on. In 1967 the Calabaris under Isaac Adaka Boro actually carried out the threat but were contained after three days. The same 1967 also saw the Biafran secession which was sustained for thirty months. All this is symptomatic of the chronic uneasiness experienced by the members of the various ethnic groups among each other and the consequent reluctance to interact.

#### **c. Tensions Arising from Differences in Social and Psychological Well Being**

There is a considerable reluctance, or perhaps unease among the various segments of the Nigerian population to interact among themselves. The rich do not find any common ground for interacting with the poor, nor the uneducated with the educated. On the social map of the country, some areas have a higher proportion of educated citizens than others, and consequently more people in upper and lower middle class positions with access to a higher standard of living.

The difference in social and psychological well-being arise from differences in the level of education, standard of living, and mode of thinking, perceiving and interpreting events and occurrences in society. It gives rise to a social and psychological distance

among the various segments of the Nigerian population. Psychological distance is a consequence of social distance, and sometimes it may be in the selfish interest of some people to fan its flames. Social distance often leads to psychological distance, since people of humble means are likely to keep their distance from those whose means are higher.

#### d. Differing Religious Attitudes

Religion has also become a key factor in the political environment in Nigeria. The storm clouds that gathered over the controversial and surreptitious inclusion of Nigeria as a member of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) positively identifying her as an Islamic State, tend to thicken rather than clear up. The late Chief Obafemi Awolowo spotted the sombre clouds of divergency as far back as in 1947 and lamented how religion had created a deep gulf between the Northern and Southern portions of the country:

The peoples of Western and Eastern Regions of the South approach religion with remarkable moderation and nonchalance: Christians, Mohammedans, and so-called Pagans mix in society without restraint. The people of the North, however, are extremely fanatical about Islamism.

There is widespread anger over what appears to be a fanatical commitment by some Muslims to their religious tenets regardless of how everyone else is affected. Even though the Northern part of Nigeria has a Muslim majority of 71%, Islam comes away with a trailing 43.5% in the West while in the East it registers a near-insignificant .3%<sup>5</sup>, and an overall 45% nationwide<sup>6</sup>. The following table will illustrate the situation more vividly<sup>7</sup>:

Table 5:

	East	Midwest	North	West
Muslims	29,964 (.3%)	106,857 (42%)	21,386,450 (71.7%)	4,753,225 (43.5%)
Christians	9,573,622 (77.2%)	1,393,009 (54.9%)	2,881,437 (9.7%)	5,359,075 (49.0%)
Others	2,790,876 (22.5%)	1,035,973 (40.9%)	5,540,773 (18.6%)	818,793 (7.5%)

Source: John J. Stremlau, *International Politics of the Nigerian Civil War*, p.114.

#### e. Lack of a Common National Language With Which All Can Identify

The question of a national language also became a controversial issue in Nigeria: the question of a *lingua franca* for the country led to endless debates producing no consensus.<sup>8</sup> Ethnic chauvinism took the centre stage as the Hausas, Yorubas and Igbos each wanted theirs to be the national language rather than any other. The late Obafemi Awolowo had advocated the creation of states in Nigeria along ethnic lines as a way to solve the problem<sup>9</sup>. This suggestion was, at least at its face value, overly optimistic. It would lead to the creation of some two hundred and fifty states in Nigeria corresponding to the different ethnic groups, since none of these groups would like to be annexed to the other. As a result three mammoth states (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba), will emerge with more than 60% of the population leaving the other 40% or 40 million to be divided into 247 states<sup>10</sup> -- at least theoretically. When 19 states were created out of the 250 linguistic groups it seems that the principle followed was to consider the natural affinity of the various groups and group them accordingly.<sup>11</sup>

The practice of projecting the three major languages of Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba almost at the expense of the others does not help matters very much either. There is no necessary connection between unity and language. What unites is not a system of codes but a disposition of heart. For example not all who speak Arabic are united. In the Persian Gulf and the Middle East, the common religious language of Arabic, has not united Iran and Iraq, or Syria and Lebanon, or the people of Afghanistan. War has been the daily experience in that turbulent zone.

Peter Ekeh notes that millions of Fulani speak Hausa and yet assert their Fulani identity, and the Igalla and Itsekiri in spite of the striking similarity of their language to the Yoruba language, would never tolerate being called Yoruba.<sup>12</sup> By the same token the Ikwerres of Rivers State would distinguish themselves from the Igbos even though their language is Igbo. It is possible for people to speak the same language and yet remain worlds apart.

Some see the diversity of languages in Nigeria as the great obstacle, but this need not be so. Since diversity of language and customs has not hampered international co-operation and friendship, it should be possible to co-operate on the national level. As Simpson and Yinger observe,<sup>13</sup> differences in language, religion and belief in the best methods for achieving life's values are not only permissible but necessary for a society that is eager to find better ways of solving its problems. Nigeria can prosper only by

promoting the integration of all ethnic groups while permitting, and indeed encouraging a wide and diversified pluralism.

#### **f. Contentious Educational Policies**

There has hardly been an educational policy in Nigeria that has not been riven with contention. Lord Lugard's accession in 1903 to the request of the Muslims of the Northern part of Nigeria that "government will in no way interfere with religion... (and that) mosques and prayer places will be treated with respect by us," was construed as insulating the Muslims against Western education and placing them at an educational disadvantage on the national scene<sup>14</sup>.

The colonial educational policy was criticised for creating a preference for grammar schools over technological.<sup>15</sup>

When in 1956 the Eastern Regional government wanted to introduce a programme of Free Primary Education, which the Western Regional Government had already implemented in the West a year earlier the Catholic hierarchy opposed it on the grounds that there was no provision for religious education<sup>16</sup>. Some suggest, however, that the chief reason was to prevent an erosion of Catholic control of primary education<sup>17</sup>. There was a bid in 1976 to reintroduce Free primary education nationwide in the so-called Universal Primary Education or UPE. That attempt too was short lived.

There is widespread dissatisfaction over the alleged favouritism behind the siting, funding and administration of Federal Government schools. There is the complaint that in the siting and funding of institutions, the hiring and firing of staff, the admission and enrolment of students, some areas have had more than their fair share while others have been left at the bare margin of things.

The government policy of establishing Federal Government Colleges in strategic locations country-wide was intended to ensure an even pace of qualitative educational development throughout the country is a welcome one, but it does not go far enough. In the first place, there are too few of these institutions to make any significant national impact soon. Secondly, their very fewness and tough entry requirements almost automatically makes it an exclusive preserve of those whose parents could afford to provide the extra instructions almost always required to pass the entrance examinations. As things have turned out, most of the students are the children of the upper middle class. Thirdly, the favoured treatment they receive from the government is often



perceived as a conspiracy to create and maintain a privileged class of citizens maintained by government at the expense of other citizens.

The educational policy that has had the most radical impact in Nigerian educational history is the state take-over of schools. It began in the East Central State, and was soon copied by the other states. The ostensible reason of achieving a planned and integrated system of education has however, not been achieved, for there is little, if any, evidence of any such integration as school textbooks varied from one state to another. In the first place, no such integrated programme ever came out. Secondly, the huge cost of financing elementary and secondary education became the responsibility of the states, and the East Central State, (later to become Imo and Anambra States), was soon unable to pay the bills required for the schools they inherited. Teachers' salaries often went unpaid and they resorted to industrial action which sometimes dragged on for months. There was therefore no opportunity to put their dreams of take-over to a real test; instead the standards badly deteriorated, leading to persistent questioning of the policy.

On the national level, education became a controversial issue when the balance was tilted in favour of the so-called educationally disadvantaged areas at the expense of the so-called educationally advantaged. The hiring of staff, the appointment of vice chancellors, the allocation of funds to the various institutions of higher learning, all have become occasions for complaint and speculation. Why, for instance, are academic and administrative positions reserved for those who are still engaged in fulltime studies while other Nigerians competent for the same position are bypassed or hired on a non-renewable contract basis? Why do some people receive guaranteed Federal Government sponsorship for studying abroad while others are completely left out? How come that some people are appointed to positions where they are the boss over their seniors and former mentors in the field? The dust will probably not settle until the ground for such questions is removed.

### **3. Addressing the Problems: Government Action**

Various solutions have been suggested including: to bridge the social and psychological distances; to divest Nigeria of vestiges of foreign dependency and promote a national sense; that Nigeria be decolonized by having its name changed,<sup>18</sup> and all remaining trappings of colonialism including Christianity and the western form of government. Some of the proposals are clearly off the mark, since both Christianity and

the various forms of government are as good or bad as those who operate them. The discomfort over Christianity arises from the challenging moral demands it make on its adherents even in public life. As for the change of name, by itself it does not unite a country unless it is accompanied by a removal of the factors that caused the division.

In accordance with the motto of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which is **Unity and Faith, Peace and Progress**, the Constitution makes it government's duty to actively promote national integration. A sure way to both national cohesion and effective moral education is the creation of a conducive social, political and moral environment. Most of the steps require government action:

- a. critically reviewing the political system and aiming at what is adapted to Nigeria's needs and circumstances;
- b. changing the socio-economic structure that seems to favour the few and disfavour the majority;
- c. bridging the social and psychological distances that result from such a structure;
- d. encouraging social mobility across ethno-linguistic lines;
- e. reviewing the system of justice to ensure equal justice under the law in a uniform system of justice;
- f. a vigorous programme of mass civic and related forms of education to enable the citizens to understand and better appreciate their national values;
- g. a general review of educational and related policies to reflect the ideals of national unity and promote mutual understanding among the citizens.
- h. improving transport and communications links that will facilitate the interaction of the citizens.

#### **a. Critically Reviewing the Political System**

It is important to examine critically the political system that is operative in Nigeria to see if it is actually effective in bringing about national cohesion. The question might be raised as to whether Nigeria's cohesion is better guaranteed as a federation with semi-autonomous states; as a confederation with the states quasi autonomous; or as a unitary government with the states nominally autonomous or with no autonomy at all;

or "an entirely new arrangement which will be peculiar to Nigeria and which has not yet found its way into any political dictionary."<sup>19</sup>

The question is not a new one in Nigeria. It has been in discussion prior to independence and after the counter coup that put an end to Ironsi's decree establishing a unitary form of government. In September 1966, the then Head of State Yakubu Gowon formally abolished the Unification Decree which was a great bone of contention in the Ironsi regime and reinstated the Federal system of Government.<sup>20</sup> He had convened a constitutional conference to consider the four options which while ruling out a unitary form had room for an entirely new arrangement.

#### **b. Review the Socio-Economic Structure**

The Constitution (II.16.1a) has stated the economic objectives of the country to include the running of the economy in such a way as to secure the *maximum welfare*, freedom and happiness of *every citizen* on the basis of social justice and equality of status and opportunity. The social and economic structure which overwhelmingly favours the rich against the poor must be reviewed. In this connection the salary structure keeps a few rich while many are left in poverty. A study by Oladimeji Alo of the salary structure in the Western State of Nigeria for the year 1966-1973 shows this amazing disparity. In the 1966/67 fiscal year, 89% of tax payers in the Western State earned N.200 (two hundred naira) or less, while 1% earned above N.1000.00. For the 1971/72 fiscal year, the ratio of earnings between the lowest and the highest income groups stood at more than 5:1.<sup>21</sup> A breakdown of the figures in the years under review show that the poorest 20% received only 8% of the gross income; the poorest 60% received only 27.50%; the middle 40-60% received only 11.50%, while the top 20% got 57% and the topmost 5% took a whole 40% of the gross national income.<sup>22</sup> This salary structure remains basically operational countrywide till date.

#### **c. Bridge the Social and the Psychological Distances**

Injudicious management of the national economy has rendered the government financially incapable of providing such rights as free education at the primary, secondary, university and adult literacy levels. This inability contributes in no small way to the perpetuation of the social and psychological distances, since it undermines the basis of "equality of status and opportunity" sought by the Constitution by limiting access to education and all its promises only to those who can afford to pay for it.

Social distance can also be eliminated through social mobility -- the possibility to settle and earn one's living anywhere in Nigeria as provided for in the Constitution (II.15b). So far the government, especially in the states, has shown great reluctance in granting residency rights to Nigerians who wish to settle in states other than their "home" states. Interviews for jobs and the issuance of certificates of occupancy usually give priority to the "sons (or daughters) of the soil."

#### **d. Encourage Social Mobility Across Ethno-Linguistic Lines**

Because of the social and psychological distance as well as ethnic rivalries, many Nigerians are unable or unwilling to marry outside their own ethnic area. As a result, their perception of the other peoples remains distant and peripheral, and they remain perpetually strangers. Citizens know only about the textbook compatriots of fantasy but never get to meet or know the real ones. Hence the Constitution (II.15c,d) encourages "intermarriage among persons from different places of origin, or of different religious, ethnic or linguistic associations or ties," and the promotion or encouragement of the formation of "associations that cut across ethnic, linguistic, religious or other sectional barriers."

#### **e. Review the System of Justice**

In Nigeria's judicial system there exist at the Federal level the Supreme Court, the Federal Court of Appeal, and the Federal High court. Notwithstanding the human errors that sometimes arise in the delivery of justice, the system is uniform in its demands on every citizen. The same is true of the High Courts in the states. There is no problem with the customary court of appeal since it limits itself to matters of local customs where constitutional provisions are lacking.

The problem arises with the demands of the Sharia Court of Appeal which is based on the Islamic Religion. Its point of reference is the Koran instead of the Constitution. Although said to apply only to Muslims (Constitution 242), it provides for the possibility "where all the parties to the proceedings (whether or not they are muslims) have requested the court that hears the case in the first instance to determine that case in accordance with Islamic personal law..."(242e). The implication here is the possibility of a parallel system of justice based on religious lines and independent of the laws of the land.

Though its declared area of jurisdiction is questions of personal law regarding the validity or dissolution of a marriage contracted according to Islamic law, and questions regarding *wakf*, (a gift, will or succession where the deceased person is a Muslim), the Sharia law can stretch to other areas of human interaction. Muslim litigants might collude to circumvent the laws of the country in other matters by opting for hearings according to the Sharia court, and probably get away with little or no penalties. When the dispute is between a Muslim and a non-Muslim, the issues are compounded.

According to Hyppolyte Adigwe<sup>23</sup>, under a Sharia law, non-Muslims do not enjoy equality of status as Muslims. He refers to the *Qasas* or retrieval law which states that punishment of similar severity should be meted out to any offender, but which is promptly modified when a non-Muslim is involved. Thus if a non-Muslim kills a Muslim, the doctrine is fully applied; but if a Muslim kills a non-Muslim it does not apply since, in the words of the Prophet himself, "the brain of a non-Muslim is half that of a Muslim"<sup>24</sup>. A non-Muslim woman who is married to a Muslim cannot, under the Sharia, inherit his property should he die; nor can a non-Muslim brother inherit his deceased Muslim brother's property.

In matters pertaining to marriage, a marriage contracted between a Muslim and a non-Muslim is deemed null and void and if such a marriage comes before the Sharia Court it will be dissolved forthwith with no benefits to the non-Muslim partner who, according to Islamic law, has no rights in the first place. Finally, a Muslim converting to Christianity is given three days to turn to his original faith. If he fails, he is killed.<sup>25</sup>

Since the system of justice is meant to protect all the rights and freedoms of the citizen as guaranteed by the constitution, a system of justice that places one citizen above another on any basis whatever, is prejudicial to the Constitution. Since Nigeria is not an Islamic but a secular state, and has a population that is 49% Christian, 6% belonging to other religions, and 45% Muslim according to 1980 estimates,<sup>26</sup> a unified system of justice is more likely than any other to ensure equal justice, equal rights to citizens.

#### **f. Massive Citizenship Education**

Besides education in the liberal arts and exact sciences, a well-rounded political education is necessary for a fuller appreciation of what it means and what it takes to be a responsible citizen in modern Nigeria. It requires a joint effort between the govern-

ment and the school. The government provides the sponsorship while the school provides the educational programme. The programme will involve themes on the status of citizens<sup>27</sup>, their rights and obligations as provided for by the Constitution<sup>28</sup>, the meaning and process of democracy<sup>29</sup>, and the social, political and moral virtues that dispose citizens to work for harmony, peace and progress in a democracy<sup>30</sup>. As can be seen, most of these themes are contained in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, some are found in the National Anthems (old and new) and the National Pledge<sup>31</sup>, while the rest are found scattered in government documents.

There is therefore ample resource material to sustain such a school programme, and a coherent scheme capable of producing the required result can be drawn up from them. In the National Pledge, the Nigerian pledges to be "faithful, loyal and honest", and "to defend (Nigeria's) unity." The national anthems (old and new) stand for brotherhood and tolerance in spite of the great diversity in the country, and the National Coat-of-Arms bears the inscription: Unity and Faith.

In addition to school work, extensive use should be made of the print and electronic media -- film strips, documentaries, symposia, seminars -- for a deeper education on issues of national unity, the desirability of unity over division, the stunting effects of ethnicity, the positive aspects of pluralism, the place of religion and the need for prudence and moderation in its exercise.

#### **g. Review Educational Policies**

Government educational policy can play a catalytic role in bringing about the desired understanding and shared ideals among students. In view of the fact that students, especially those of the Federal Government Colleges who have placements outside their "states of origin", never get to know and associate with the local environment outside the school precincts, a programme of interstate exchange during the summer period will enable students to experience the direct family environment in the host state, and establish friendships that could last a lifetime. Such exchange programmes have been successfully carried out among alumni of certain institutions and have involved students from Europe. It is commendable that the National Youth Service Corps already operates on that principle of national integration such that young graduates are required to perform their National Youth Service outside their home states.

National cohesion does not come from a few citizen satisfied at the expense a majority of their compatriots. In the siting of educational institutions, care should be

taken to consider the serviceability of such institutions to the local community. A Federal Government College is of no use in a locality if the children cannot get into it, but play perpetual hosts to others from other places. Thus, while qualitative education is sought, adequate provision should be made for all who want to be educated. The educational institutions should therefore be sited where they could be of maximum benefit to the local population without necessarily excluding children from other localities who wish to be educated therein.

In government institutions, effort should be made to promote national integration. In the Federal Government Colleges the spirit of integration is not quite as evident as might be desired. Most students complete their course of studies without getting to know any bit of the place where their school is located. They learn everything but ignore the local realities around them. They march, sing, dance, dramatize -- but all in English or French and never get to learn the local language. They are in fact forbidden to use the vernacular. They are thus ill equipped to interact outside the controlled school environment. From this point of view, the Federal Government Colleges have failed because of their inability to help the students integrate into their local environment. The schools as they are now, are no more useful for National unity and national integration than any school in Britain or France. All they achieve in that regard is like training people to be foreigners in their own country.

Furthermore, the state take-over of schools has been perceived to be a punitive measure directed against the voluntary agencies involved in the field of education. Concerning the compulsory acquisition of property the Constitution (IV:40) forbids any such acquisition. This situation must be justly resolved either by offering compensation for the schools or their return to their original owners. Since free enterprise is encouraged in Nigeria, there is no justification for clamping down on those who chose the field of education as their own field of endeavour especially since such has been specifically provided for in the Constitution. Since the controversy has dragged on now for twenty years it is time to resolve it either by a referendum or by a constitutional amendment.

#### **h. Improve Transport and Communications Links Between the Peoples.**

Where citizens have the facility to travel through all parts of the country and communicate easily, their knowledge and appreciation of the country as a unit is improved and enhanced. The language barrier will steadily diminish as through sheer

interaction most people find a reason to get to know each other's language in order to be able to communicate with them. But where everyone remains confined to his or her ethnic zone there could never be a point of meeting.

#### 4. The Constitution: Ideals and Reality

A country's constitution is its most important document since it outlines its national objectives for itself and its citizens. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria provides an indispensable reference point for the country's national life. Talking about the nature and composition of the government, it states that government should be "carried out in such a way as to reflect the federal character of Nigeria (by ensuring that) there be no predominance of persons from a few States or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in that government or any of its agencies in order to "promote a sense of belonging and loyalty among all the peoples of the Federation" (II.3,4). The opening statement of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1979) states as follows:

**"We the people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, having firmly and solemnly resolved: To live in unity and harmony as one, indivisible, and indissolubly sovereign nation under God, dedicated to the promotion of inter-African solidarity, world peace, international cooperation and understanding: And to provide for a Constitution for the purpose of promoting good government and welfare of all persons in our country on the principles of freedom, equality and justice, and for the purpose of consolidating the unity of our people: do hereby make... the following Constitution:"**

It is significant that in the Constitution "the people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria resolved..." The implication is that over and above any individual interests or considerations, the people had resolved to find principles to govern social and political life without necessarily beclouding individual concerns. The Constitution therefore forms a moral basis, and has important consequences for moral reflection. In it the people agree to an arrangement which they consider to be fair to all, but without actually worrying about how it will benefit them personally.

The Constitution highlights such ideals as loyalty, honesty and fidelity which are the characteristics of good citizens. Loyalty among citizens precludes rebellion against



legitimate authority or engagement in any form of subversive activity. Loyal citizens do whatever is necessary to uphold and maintain their nation's goals and ideals. They stand by their country through thick and thin; they obey its laws, and uphold its values. A striking fact about Nigeria at the present moment is that almost everything about it seems to operate unconstitutionally. The incumbent administration came into being unelected having seized power by force. This is clearly contrary to the provisions of the Constitution that no person or group of persons shall "take control of the Government of Nigeria or any part thereof except in accordance with the provisions of this constitution" (I:1,2).

The Constitution specifies that Nigeria is a secular state where everyone is equal under the law. The provisions of the Sharia law negate this provision by treating litigants unequally if they are non-Muslims. Furthermore, §35 of the Constitution which guarantees freedom of thought, freedom of conscience and freedom of association is thwarted by a favouring of one religion or mode of perception over others. In §10 of Chapter I.II of the Constitutions it is clearly stated: "The Government of the Federation or of a State shall not adopt any religion as State Religion." The registering of Nigeria into the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) contravenes the Constitution by implying that Nigeria is an Islamic state whose laws will favour Islamic tenets.

The objectives of the OIC which require the appointment of only Muslims into strategic national and international posts contravene the equal opportunities clause, and goes against the principle of maintaining the Federal Character in all government appointments. Guaranteed to Muslims under the OIC provision are the posts of President, Defence Minister, Foreign Minister, Oil Minister, Finance and Economic Planning, and Education and Technology<sup>32</sup>.

Nigeria's record with regard to adherence to the prescriptions of the Constitution is quite unsatisfactory. It is riven by corruption, abuse of office and mismanagement in high places. The constitutional ideals and those provided by other documents are frequently ignored, and people do only what brings them or their interest group the greatest advantage. National goals are then conveniently set aside. So long as national goals are set aside in favour of parochial ones, there is no chance of the diverse peoples of Nigeria can come together since everyone will be too busy with local issues to be concerned with national interests. Our individual needs and desires are always greater than our individual power to satisfy them; and they can be fulfilled only by the co-operative effort of society.

## 5. The Challenges of Pluralism

Pluralism's challenge in Nigeria manifests itself in ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity. It is a daunting task for Nigerians to seek to hold together in spite of the diversity. The challenge of pluralism was met by an impressive motto powerfully expressed in the first Nigerian National Anthem:

*Though tribe and tongue may differ, in brotherhood we stand,  
Nigerians all, and proud to serve our sovereign motherland.*

In this connection, to attain the national goals of unity and brotherhood, tolerance and openness are a must. Many philosophers have sustained the thesis that the good society is characterized by the co-existence of many social groupings. As Charles Dechert points out,<sup>33</sup> the concept of pluralism leads to a conceptual model of a pluralistic society characterized by a multiplicity of dimensions in social life (political, religious, economic, territorial, ethnic, etc.), and a multiplicity of groups within a given dimension. What is most desirable in a pluralistic society is the possibility of a many-pronged development of characteristics best adapted to the goals of human survival, and a relatively high degree of personal freedom. This would require an institutional structure that would permit the competitive interplay of various groupings while bringing into action automatic compensations based upon mutual interdependence in order to prevent a monopoly of power by any single group.

Plato divides his Republic according to functional groups. Aristotle for his part bases his morphology of Constitutions on the number ruling. But while his distinction between oligarchy and democracy essentially implies a class distinction, his polity is characterized by a balance of class interests and participation. In either case the goal is unity amidst a diversity of functions, of backgrounds and of methods. Nigeria's circumstances require an admixture of both principles, namely a clarification of the modes and conditions of interaction in a situation where there is a diversity of backgrounds, tendencies and functions. The application of these two principles will give rise to an amicable, open-minded, non-confrontational approach to the challenges; a tolerant, non-censorious approach to divergent religious views; and a positive effort to evolve an integrated set of moral values in Nigeria.

Conflict and competition need not always characterize human interaction. If anything, they are only an existential hazard, and hazards as chance events need not dictate the tempo of life and activity. Co-operation, rather than confrontation is of

crucial importance where unity is the goal. Compared to toleration it seems to demand a higher level of understanding and autonomy for, while toleration could possibly be construed as coldness and indifference, co-operation is an evidence of genuine interest in and acceptance of, the prosperity of another's activity. Moreover, a large part of societal interactions occur symbiotically, and each individual and group benefits from the existence and actions of others. Therefore, if Nigeria's institutional structure can produce a high degree of mutual dependency rather than antagonism, the challenge of pluralism would have been successfully met.

The first step in achieving mutual co-operation in a pluralist society is mutual toleration. Toleration operates on a simple principle: *I may not share your views but I do respect your right to hold them*. John Stuart Mill said something similar in his defence of liberty and individuality by showing the indirect benefits of toleration. He argued that only individuals of strong character will set examples of more enlightened conduct, and that unless they were allowed the freedom to set this example the generality of persons will lose the opportunity of witnessing innovative examples with the possible benefits to their own conduct.

It must be pointed out, though, that the right to be different, which is one of the characteristics of autonomy is protected in both toleration and co-operation. Robert Nozick makes a similar point when he points out that there is not one kind of life that is best for the variety of individuals that exist. Individuals should be free to pursue their own kind of life provided they respected the right of others.<sup>34</sup> The individual or component group must realize that there are practical limitations on the extent to which individuals living in the same society can differ from one another in the pattern of life they lead. It is the law and other societal conventions that set the limit. One's religious, social, or political affiliation could place a further restriction on the individual. By voluntarily belonging to these organizations one has given one's consent to submit to these restrictions.

Religious toleration is another area of critical importance. As John Rawls points out, believers of all sorts of religions attach great importance to the freedom to practise their religion and worship in the way they please<sup>35</sup>. With this recognition they would converge on the view that a fair framework for religious practices would be one in which all persons had the equal right to freedom of religious conscience and practice. Rawls' optimism is plausible here, except for the fact that it takes no account of situations of religious fundamentalism and religious fanaticism. In such circumstances

certain religions see themselves as the only true religion, and others as false. They would often consider it their religious duty to put an end to all "false" religions either by persuading other religious groups to renounce their own faiths and join them or physically try to force them to close down.

Religious toleration must culminate in a meeting of minds and a conscious disposition on the part of all to be respectful, considerate and kind in regarding other people's beliefs.

## **6. Nigeria's Religious Traditions: A Potential Resource**

Though the diversity of traditions sometimes adds to the conflict, the generally religious orientation of Nigerians is a positive resource for national cohesion especially if it is accompanied by an accepting, accommodating and co-operative disposition on the part of all persons involved in the various religious traditions. The religious traditions have the possibility of providing a religious view of the world that will move each one to respect the realities in the world as belonging to higher divine power. They have, in addition, the possibility of creating an atmosphere for dialogue, mutual understanding and mutual toleration among the various groups. Finally, they can provide an integrated set of moral values that can be applied in the moral formation of Nigeria's citizens.

In spite of the plurality of religious beliefs and the possibility of non-belief among some segments of Nigerian population, a religious view of the world which acknowledges that there is a higher power that controls the world is prevalent among Nigerians<sup>36</sup>. That is already a pre-disposition to hold in awe the realities one encounters in the universe -- the environment, human beings, objects.

Carol Markstrom Adams raises an interesting speculative question as to the kind of situation that would obtain and the nature of religious experience one would expect where there is pluralism such that there was not one dominant religion.<sup>37</sup> There would be fewer instances of religious discrimination and less overt criticism of others' beliefs. Such a community would consider itself fortunate, for where there is no minority there will be no fear of dominance of one group by another.

The combination of political, religious and ethical pluralism seems to promise the best recipe for the meeting of minds among Nigeria's various groups through a mechanism of exchange where everyone might have to give something up in order to

share in what the others have to offer. Where there is pluralism of any sort, a meeting of minds can only be achieved through toleration.

Toleration is an issue over which Traditional Religion, Islam and Christianity experience considerable difference in their various perceptions of it. Traditional Religion seems to lend itself more easily and naturally to religious toleration than Christianity and Islam. Islamic teaching has aspects to it that make toleration quite a challenge and, in spite of the fact that their religion is built on the principles of love, meekness, forbearance, some Christians have been known to manifest a lack of toleration in their dealings with people of other faiths.

J.S. Mbiti attributes African Traditional Religion's disposition to toleration to its pragmatic character which is occasioned by its non-dependence on any scriptural authority:

Having no scriptures, it has been able to move with the times, and it has produced no religious controversies. People are free to hold different views and beliefs without the danger of being accused of heresy or falsehood... African Religion is very pragmatic and realistic. It is applied to a situation as the need arises.<sup>38</sup>

As revealed world religions, Islam and Christianity tenaciously hold to the exclusivity of their legacies and the superiority of their worth and origins in comparison to others. Though non-European in origin, Christianity has taken on many trappings of European culture as a result its many centuries of close association with Europe. Incidentally, Europe produced most of the best known apologists of the Christian faith till date. But since the decade of the 1960s there has been a steady increase in openness to other cultures as the vernacular has replaced Latin and Greek -- the two European languages which from the earliest times became the official languages of Christianity. Latin had replaced Greek in the Middle Ages but held influence well into the 20th century with its last bastion in Catholic liturgy. Now there is an increasing disposition towards toleration among Christians towards members of other Christian denominations and people of other faiths.

By the same token, Islam has become quite synonymous with Arabic culture. Historically wherever Islam and Christianity encountered each other or other religions there has always been tension, within both, sectarian tension has always been rife. All that is steadily changing now. With a broadening of world-views among the members

of both religions and a preference for dialogue rather than confrontation, the way of toleration is no longer an impossible dream but a realizable objective.

The Islamic attitude towards toleration is at variance with the Christian. In *Dar al-Islam* (Islamic domain) non-Muslims are regarded as protected citizens who should pay for this protection in the form of *jizya*, (a special poll tax).<sup>39</sup> Even though the *Dhimmis* or "unbelievers" may have the right to practise their religions, they are excluded from certain posts in the domain of Islam. The Koran sometimes encourages a belligerent attitude to non-Islamic believers:

Fight those who do not believe in Allah, nor in the latter day, nor do they prohibit what Allah and His Apostle have prohibited, nor follow the religion of truth, out of those who have been given the Book, until they pay the tax *in acknowledgment of superiority* and they are in a *state of subjection* (Surah: ix: 29).

It must be pointed out here that most Muslims in Nigeria do not think Surah ix:29 should be taken literally. It is only some fundamentalists, like the followers of Maitatsine, that would take it as an injunction to take up arms and bring about a restoration of Islam. Maitatsine was an obscure but enigmatic militant who having moved in from the neighbouring Cameroon, twice in 1983, once in 1985, and once in 1987, organised a violent uprising of Islamic fundamentalists in his bid to restore what he described as the true spirit of Islam. His group has since been broken up by the government security forces. Also some Muslims did distance themselves from the inflammatory remarks of Abubakar Gumi already referred to in section 10 of Chapter one. The problem of Nigeria's controversial membership of the OIC appears to be more of a political problem with a political rather than religious solution.

It was not until quite recently that Christianity as a movement has made toleration an explicit commitment. In spite of the "love your enemies" taught by Jesus, and the injunction to "let the cockle grow along with the wheat", it is only the past nearly three decades that contemptuous reference to "pagans", "infidels", "heretics", "anathema", has now all but ceased. Since then the Church has issued declaration after declaration committing itself to toleration<sup>40</sup>. Thus at its meeting in New Delhi in 1961, the World Council of Churches declared:

God's redemptive dealing with men is not coercive. Accordingly, human attempt by legal enactment or by pressure of social customs to coerce or to eliminate faith are violations of the fundamental ways of God with men.<sup>41</sup>

The Catholic Church, which is not a member of the World Council of Churches made its own declaration in the document *Dignitatis Humanae* of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). The Council identified as the ultimate foundation for the right to religious liberty the dignity of the human person as known through the revealed word of God. It concluded: "This right of the human person to religious freedom must be given such recognition in the constitutional order of society as will make it a civil right<sup>42</sup>".

The spirit of toleration can be fostered by seeking for an integrated set of basic values. In his recipe for evolving a set of basic values for Nigeria, Otonti Nduka notes that the need for moral integration on a national scale necessitates the making of a concerted effort to evolve a set of trans-cultural, trans-religious and trans-ethnic basic values to which the mass of Nigerians can subscribe.<sup>43</sup> In no other area is such an integrated set of values as urgent as in the area of religion, especially in as much as it provides material for moral education. When these values are identified and combined in one course in Nigerian schools has the probable effect of destroying the myth the adherents of each group hold about each other's beliefs and practices<sup>44</sup>. While the common factors already present are useful resources the intention is not just to extract them from the religions and teach them out of context, but must be carefully studied and organised in such a way as to respect important areas of difference.

Table 6:	Traditional Religion in W. Africa	Islam in West Africa	Christianity in Post 19th c. W. Africa
Sexual Intercourse Before			
Marriage	No	No	No
Puberty Rites	Yes	No	No
Adultery	No	No	No
Divorce	Yes	No	No
Polygyny	Yes	Yes	No
Bachelorhood/Spinsterhood	No	No	Yes+
Celibate Clergy	No	No	Yes
Breach of Covenant	No	No	No
Bribery	No	No	No
Profiteering	No*	No*	No
Theft/Robbery	No	No	No
Dishonesty	No	No	No
Tribalism	Yes	No	No
Domestic Slavery	Yes	Yes*	No
Animal Sacrifice	Yes	Yes	No
Human Sacrifice	Yes+	No	No
War	Yes	Yes	No+
Retaliation	Yes	Yes	No
Alcohol	Yes	No	Yes*
Divination	Yes	Yes*	No
Tendency to produce 3rd Generation Atheism	No	No*	Yes

Source: E A. Ade Adegbola, (Ed.) *Traditional Religion in West Africa*, Ibadan: Daystar Press, 1983, pp.256f.  
 [The Astericized\* entries were supplied by me based on the nuances of the teachings of the religions in question;  
 and the entries marked + are ones which I think might need some qualification].

A quick glance through the various points of moral concern in Traditional Religion, Islam and Christianity show an impressive convergence of values and attitudes in areas of moral import. Adultery, pre-marital sexual intercourse, the breach of covenant, bribery (and corruption?), profiteering, theft, dishonesty, which are all areas of central concern for all Nigerians are unequivocally condemned by all three religions. Thus anyone guilty of any of the offenses stands condemned, and anyone whose life is free of them is indeed living according to the norms of probity. There is no connection between a multiple-wife marriage which is perfectly respectable in Nigeria, and adultery.

Puberty rites are no moral issues, since one does not become better or worse for going through them or refraining from them. It is in base a (physical, psychological and spiritual) health measure, a matter of style of life which differs from locality to locality,



and which the members of one community do not seek to impose on their neighbours. Matters of lifestyle like alcohol intake are of little moral importance.

A somewhat similar point can be made about bachelorhood/spinsterhood which, if it ever occurs, might only be the peculiarity of the religion that practises it, and is never imposed on neighbours. A concrete example is in the celibate clergy required in the Catholic brand of Christianity. In itself celibacy is technically referred to as one of the "Evangelical Counsels" of voluntary chastity, poverty, and obedience often based on Jesus' teaching in Matthew 19:10,12: "It is not everyone who can accept what I have said (about continence), but only those to whom it is granted... Let anyone accept this who can." Also the I Corinthians 7: 1,6-7:

Now for the questions about which you wrote. Yes, it is a good thing for a man not to touch a woman; ... I am telling you this as a concession, not an order. I should like everyone to be as I am myself; but everyone has his own gift from God, one this kind and the next something different.

An area of great moral import is the question of domestic slavery, which has by now virtually disappeared. What really occurred was not a situation of slavery but one of contract<sup>45</sup>. In traditional Nigerian society, no loss of social status resulted from such a contract and at the expiration of the contract everyone resumed normal life.

In Islam the status of slaves is quite different. The master or mistress has absolute power over the life and person of the slave.<sup>46</sup> In other respects the slaves are usually well treated and they are, not infrequently emancipated especially at the death of their owner. In Christianity, slavery as an institution has completely disappeared.

Concerning the sacrifice of animals, in so far as excessive cruelty is avoided, it has no greater moral import than the ordinary killing of animals for the purpose of food. But human sacrifice as an aspect of religion nowhere obtains especially in the face of modern civilization and modern laws. The same respect for life which characterises all three religions prevents human sacrifice from becoming a part of religious practice. The issue of war remains highly controversial among Christians. Aquinas in Question 40 of his *Summa Theologica* dealt with the conditions under which kings can go to war. The principle of a just war which he enunciated seem to be present Traditional Religion. Islam believes in just wars but can invoke as their justification the purpose the spreading of the Islamic faith<sup>47</sup>.

The last entry about a religion's tendency to produce third generation atheism is more likely in Christianity which tends to distinguish between spiritual life and social and political life. Sometimes a crisis of perception or an unfulfilled expectation may lead to disillusionment and disenchantment from the practice of Christian religion in favour of something which clearly works. Unlike Christianity, Traditional Religion and Islam create no dichotomy between what is religious and what is not for there is a compenetration of all aspects of life in them.

## Notes

1. The slogan that followed every radio news item during the civil war was: ***TO KEEP NIGERIA ONE, IS A TASK THAT MUST BE DONE!*** In one of his top hits following immediately after the war, an eminent Nigerian musician the late "Cardinal" Rex Jim Lawson used the name of the then Head of State, Yakubu Gowon as an acronym that turned into a slogan for Nigerian unity: ***G-O-W-O-N, GO ON WITH ONE NIGERIA!***
2. On May 24 1966, General Aguiyi Ironsi, the then incumbent military Head of State issued a decree (Decree No.39) which stipulated that Nigeria "shall cease to be a Federation and shall accordingly as from that day be a Republic...; all officers... in a civil capacity shall be officers of a single service." (cf. Federal Republic of Nigeria, Constitution (Suspension and Modification) (No.5), Decree 1966, Official Gazette, No.57, Vol 53, May 24, 1966.
3. Peil, Margaret, Nigeria, the People's View, London: Cassell & Company Ltd, 1976, p.77.
4. Awolowo, Obafemi, Thoughts on Nigerian Constitution, London: Oxford University Press, 1966, p.99.
5. Stremblau, John J., The International Politics of the Nigerian Civil War, 1967-1970, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1971, p.114.
6. See Barrett, David B., (Ed), World Christian Encyclopaedia, Comparative Survey of Churches and Religions in the Modern World: AD 1900-2000, Oxford, London: Oxford University Press, 1986, p.527.
7. The figures were based on the controversial 1963 census which remain the last official demographic figures about Nigeria others being mere estimates not based on any actual headcount.
8. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1979 specifically provides for the possibility of the use of English, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba in conducting the business of the National Assembly when adequate arrangement has been made. (Chapter V Part I B no.51) This provision gives the four languages an official national status.
9. See Coleman, James S., Nigeria: Background to Nationalism, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1958, p.388. Awolowo had proposed that Nigeria be divided into nine states: four in the North, two in the West, and three in the East. His aim was to free the minority groups from the crushing grip of the majority groups. Specifically, however, he was eager to free the Middle Belt Yorubas from Hausa-

Fulani domination. It was a welcome proposal to the Minority groups especially the so-called COR (Calabar, Ogoja and Rivers) state movement eager to cast off Igbo domination in the East. (See Coleman, *ibid.* p.395). Zik objected to the plan on the grounds that it was based primarily on anti-Igbo sentiment.

10. See the statistics in Chapter One p.17. And when the next "three", the Fulani, the Ibibio and the Kanuri, together constituting another 21% of the population respectively with 11.2%, 5.6%, and 4.2%, the disparity is all the more staggering.
11. When the time came to create the states, Awolowo was well placed to have four Yoruba-speaking states -- Ondo, Ogun, Oyo, and Lagos -- while only two states were created for the Igbo-speaking areas -- Anambra and Imo. In the 19-state structure of Nigeria, 4 states went to the East, 4 went to the West, 1 went to the Midwest while 10 went to the North. The Igbo-speaking areas who still claimed numerical majority over the Yorubas felt cheated, since their basic share of parliamentary representatives was only half of what their numerical strength warranted and half those of the Yorubas in relation to whom they had expected to have proportionately more representatives.
12. Ekeh, Peter, "Citizenship and Political Conflict", in Nigeria: the Dilemma of Nationhood, p.87.
13. Simpson, George & Milton Yinger, J., Racial and Cultural Minorities, New York: Harper and Row, 1965, p.492.
14. Nwagwu, Nicholas A., "Review of Nigerian Educational Policy Research", Current Trends in Nigerian Educational Research, Lagos: Nigerian Educational Research Council, 1985, p.38.
15. Afigbo, Adiele, "The Background to the Southern Nigeria Education Code of 1903", Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, Vol 4, No 2, June 1968, pp.197-226.
16. In the document, Eastern Region: Universal Primary Education -- Policy Statement Number 5 it was stated that "children would be free to absent themselves from religious instruction in all schools and, in Local Authority schools, religious instruction would be in accordance with the wishes of the parents." See I.O. Umejesi, "The Legacy of Early Denominational Rivalry to Contemporary Eastern Nigeria," an unpublished seminar paper for the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1987.

17. Cooke, Coleman M., "Church, State and Education: The Eastern Nigeria Experience, 1950-1967", Christianity in Independent Africa, Edited by E.F. Luke et al, London: Rex Collings, 1978, p.199.
18. The new name commonly proposed *Wazobia*, an acronym from the Yoruba (Wa), Hausa (Zo), and Igbo (Bia), terms for "come" which are meant to depict a constant disposition to welcome one another.
19. Federal Government of Nigeria, Nigeria 1966, pp.37-40.
20. See, Federal Government of Nigeria, Decree No.59, Supplement to Official Gazette Extraordinary, No.85, Vol.53, September 1, 1966.
21. The figures for 1981 place the average income at N2,300 the equivalent of \$3745 (US), but the same basic flaws remain unchanged. See Encyclopaedia Britannica, Book of the Year 1988 p.671.
22. Awa, E.O., Issues on Federalism, Benin: Ethiope Publishing Corporation, 1976, p.103.
23. Adigwe, H.A., Nigeria Joins the Organisation of Islamic Conference, OIC, Onitsha, Nigeria: Archdiocesan Secretariat, Catholic Archdiocese of Onitsha, 1987, pp.12-16.
24. *ibid.* p.15.
25. *ibid.*
26. See Barret, David B., (ed), World Christian Encyclopaedia, Comparative Survey of Churches and Religions in the Modern World: Ad 1900-2000, Oxford, London: Oxford University Press, p. 527.
27. Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Chapter III §§21-29.
28. *ibid.* §§30-42.
29. *ibid.*, Chapter I, §§1-12.
30. The opening statement of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria commits Nigerians to a resolution to live in unity and harmony, to promote good government based on the principles of freedom, equality and justice.
31. The full text of Nigerian National Anthem, old and new, the National Pledge, and the Biafran National Anthem are given in the Appendix at the end of this chapter.

32. Adigwe, H.A., op. cit. p.15.
33. Dechert, Charles, "A Pluralist World Order" in New Dynamics in Ethical Thinking, Ed. by George F. McLean, Lancaster, Pennsylvania: Concorde Publishing Company, 1974, pp.128-147.
34. Nozick, Robert, Anarchy, State and Utopia, Oxford: Blackwell, 1974, p.310.
35. Rawls, John, A Theory of Justice, London: Oxford University Press, 1972, p.216.
36. It seems appropriate at this point to draw attention to the expression: *one nation under God* conspicuously placed in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Reference has been made to it earlier. Scepticism about religion and the supernatural, though expressed among some Nigerian intellectuals, is far from being a widespread occurrence. It is largely due to the influence of Western philosophical culture to which these intellectuals have been intensively exposed. It could also be traced to some unpleasant personal experiences within some ecclesiastical community.
37. Adams, Carol Markstrom, "Religious Minority and Adolescents" in Religious Education, vol 84, no 3, Summer 1989, p.427.
38. Mbiti, J.S., Introduction to African Religion, New York, 1975, p.15.
39. Umejiesi, I.O., "Recent Contributions of Nigeria's Three Main Religions to the Concept of Toleration." An unpublished article, March 1988, p.11.
40. See Browlie, I., (Ed.), Basic Documents of Human Rights, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971, p.110.  
See also, Vissert-Hooft, W.A., (Ed.), "Statement on Religious Liberty" The New Delhi Report (The Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches of 1961), London: Oxford University Press, 1962, pp.159-161;  
Flannery, Austin, (Ed.), "Declaration on Religious Liberty", Vatican Council II: Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents, Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1975, p.800.
41. Vissert-Hooft, W.A., op. cit. p.161.
42. Flannery, Austin, (Ed.), Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents, p.800.

43. Nduka, O.A. & Iheoma, E.O., (Ed.), New Perspectives in Moral Education, p.26.
44. The moral aspects of the three religions are discussed in Chapter Seven.
45. It is probably inaccurate to describe what used to obtain in traditional Nigerian society as domestic slavery in the sense of the plight of victims of the infamous slave trade that was carried out in parts of Africa. What obtained was a social mechanism whereby an indebted person would have his or her debt paid in exchange for hiring himself or herself out for a period of time to do domestic work until the debt has been cleared. It is similar to the slavery Locke describes in his Two Treatises, II §25.10 as "only to Drudgery, not to Slavery... For the Master could not have power to kill him, at any time, whom, at a certain time, he was obliged to leg go free out of his Service..."
46. Bettany, G.T., "Modern Islam", Encyclopaedia of World Religions, New York: Dorset Press, 1988, p.553.
47. *ibid.* p.567.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### WHAT CAN NIGERIA LEARN FROM WESTERN THEORY?

*Personally I'm always ready to learn, although I do not always like being taught.*  
– WINSTON CHURCHILL.

*If all mankind, minus one, were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing humanity.*  
– JOHN STUART MILL, *On Liberty*.

Nigeria has the advantage of, as it were, drawing from many political, ethical and religious sources from all over the world. She has, however, special mentor-ward ties with the West and therefore has had a lot to learn from Western theories. The important advantage Nigeria has with regard to Western theory is the opportunity take a complete and sober look at each theory both in its conception and in its implementation – the prospects as well as the problems with each before deciding on her course of action. In that way the problem areas can be identified in advance and dealt with.

Education has sometimes been described as ‘the management of knowledge’<sup>1</sup>. What is important is not just the knowledge we acquire but what we do with it. Practical knowledge such as is obtained from political, moral, and religious education needs to be reflected in the acquirer’s subsequent actions by way of generating attitudes and responses of a certain kind. In a totalitarian state, for instance, the attitudes which the official educational machine seeks to inculcate are those of conformity, acceptance, and militant orthodoxy. In a liberal democracy, there is also a type of conformity, even if it is the conformity to a belief in openness and freedom of enquiry. In the moral sphere the attitude is one of conformity to certain standards of behaviour regarded as good and acceptable; and in the religious sphere one of acceptance, awe and belief.

From Western political theory Nigeria has learnt the ideals of modern democracy even if she may not be amenable to all its methods. She has also come to discover the necessity for tolerance rather than confrontation. From Western ethical theory she has learnt new ways of inculcating and evaluating virtue; and from Western conceptions of religion she has acquired a broader view of religious toleration in a pluralist society, as well as the close link between religion and morality.



The fact of Nigeria's leaning towards the West -- politically, culturally and ideologically -- is a matter beyond question. As John Stremlau reports, when a group of Nigerian legislators were asked to indicate their opinions of various countries on the scale of 1 to 10, their preference for the West as embodied in the United States and Britain showed clearly in contrast to the Soviet Union. The United States scored 8.3, Britain scored 6.9, and the Soviet Union scored only 4.6.<sup>2</sup>

## **1. Western Political Theories**

Political theories abound in Western thought and have been applied in the government of various nations. The dominant concept in Western political theories seems to be that of democracy. It has not always been so, for both Plato and Aristotle rejected it on quite different grounds. Plato saw it as the rule of the mob because he remembered the unjust condemnation by Athenian democracy of Socrates his mentor and friend. He wanted the philosopher-king instead of a group of bigoted bureaucrats. Aristotle dismissed democracy as the rule of the poor against the rich. In the history of Western thought, a variety of theories of democracy has emerged thanks to the work of philosophers and political theorists. These theories have covered trends and tendencies from the aristocratic outlook of Plato through the qualified democracy of Aristotle, the authoritarianism of Hobbes, and the totalitarianism of Rousseau. These tendencies find expression in modified forms in the thoughts of Kant (duty for duty's sake), Hegel (the absolute spirit), and Marx (the dictatorship of the proletariat).

### **a. Some Problems**

There are some problems, however, with the applications and general attitudes with regard to the Western political theories. Among the most obvious of the problems are the tendency to universalize Western perspectives to encompass the whole world; a selective application of the principles and parameters for political legitimacy; and the inherent ambivalence within each political system as demonstrated by Aristotle.

#### **i. Tendency to Universalise Western Perspectives**

The most widespread problem with Western systems is their tendency to universalize Western experiences, perspectives and preferences as though they were in all circumstances valid for the entire human race. This universalist tendency gives rise to

a spirit of intolerance towards anything different. Political innovations are perceived as destroying the necessary conditions of government. An unexpected, order as Henri Bergson observed, is seen, as disorder. Thus when a new political system or set of rules and procedures emerges from any quarter whatsoever, the reaction is one of horror and panic.

The hostile attitude towards socialism or Marxism in general, though not altogether unjustified, can be said to be exaggerated. By the same token, the strenuous and vociferous objection in the Western media to Zimbabwe's proposed transition to a one-party state is indicative of this intolerance of any idea that is unusual or different. At the present moment pressure is being mounted on governments in the developing countries to adopt both the so-called "free market economy" and the so-called "multi-party democracy", as a condition for granting them economic aid. No such conditions are imposed before weapons are sent for internal and regional conflicts. As a result of this pressure, social unrest is threatening to engulf such countries as Kenya, Uganda, Cameroon, Zaïre, and others. (Nigeria has already committed itself to a time-table of transfer to an elected government and is therefore spared the scourge agitators in that direction) Some of these countries could in past years claim some degree of stability in spite of economic poverty. Now their stability has begun to totter.

In the 1960s which was the decade of independence for most African states, they had inherited along with national 'sovereignty' Western models of government under the multi-party system. Soon most of these "newly-independent" states found themselves having to abandon the multi-party for some reason or other. This development was no coincidence, since it was not limited to a few isolated cases, a sign that the system simply did not work. It can be said that the political turmoil that characterized the decades of the 60s, 70s and 80s is a result of trying to cast off what can be called figuratively an unwieldy Davidic shield amidst the continued insistence of their Western mentors that the armour fits. The biblical story of David and Goliath<sup>3</sup> shows that in the final analysis, victory came David's way not by his following the rules of war imposed by the conventional wisdom of mentors but by his native nimbleness of foot, his skill with the sling, and a mighty touch of good fortune. The point of the analogy is that though multi-party democracy works in the West, it has simply not worked in Nigeria and other so-called new states, and probably may not work in the immediate future. The fault is neither in the system itself nor the people of the newly-independent states

themselves. It is rather a matter of different circumstances requiring different approaches.

In trying to decide what is suitable for Nigeria's own requirements it is almost irresistible to say: let Nigeria go ahead and adopt or adapt any of the extant theories -- the best of them -- and make it hers. This temptation must be resisted, or at least viewed with great caution, and for good reasons. In the first place, there is the possibility that the newly adopted one may turn out to be unworkable. That a given political theory has worked quite well in, say, the United States or the United Kingdom, does not guarantee absolutely that it will work everywhere and in all circumstances.

Historically, politically, socio-economically, between the Western nations and Nigeria the circumstances are different. It will be presumptuous to think that the Western theories when swallowed bait, hook and sinker will be the *Open Sesame!* to all socio-political problems. There is no universally guaranteed political theory, for even the most perfect of them has its Achilles heel, and the success or failure of any given system depends most on its effectiveness in addressing the problems of the community.

## ii. Selective Application of the Principles of Political Legitimacy

Another problem with Western political theory arises in its selective application. There is the widespread tendency to shift the parameters for determining the political legitimacy. Majority vote, for example, which is the clearest indication of the will of the people suddenly becomes inapplicable in South Africa since it would necessarily mean a loss of power to an entrenched interest group. The internal contradictions of the stand are either conveniently ignored or laboriously rationalized in unconvincing rhetoric. Furthermore, at the time of colonialism, the question of discerning the people's will never came into discussion. There was no talk of human rights or national sovereignty with regard to the people colonized against their will. Instead expansionism was elevated almost to the level of virtue. Nationalist activists agitating for the independence of their colonized countries were branded insurrectionists, seditionists and enemies of the peace. The "lucky" ones among them were jailed for extensive periods of time, but the less lucky ones paid the ultimate price for subversion. Nelson Mandela is a case in point.

### iii. Inherent Ambivalence Within Each Political System

There seems to lurk within each political system an extreme that, if allowed to develop, might be considered as contradictory to the ideals of democracy. Aristotle considers three different systems and identifies the ambivalence inherent within each: Monarchy, the rule of one person, when abused becomes despotism, (where one person inflicts his or her will on others for his or her own selfish interest and against theirs); aristocracy, the rule of the best few, when abused becomes an oligarchy (where a privileged few seek their own interests in opposition to that of all); and democracy, the rule of the majority, when abused becomes also democracy, (where the poor and ignorant seek their own interests in opposition to the rich).<sup>4</sup>

When Aristotle upholds the leadership of the middle-class,<sup>5</sup> he inadvertently contributes to the use of stereotypes that has been the scourge of most political systems. Nothing stops one comparing what Aristotle advocates with either oligarchy or the type of democracy that he had earlier discredited. With oligarchy it shares the feature of favouring a few, and with democracy it shares the feature of being at some other group's expense. The middle class whom Aristotle here commends were written off by Marx as the petty bourgeoisie. Furthermore, to give rulership to the middle class as of right could not be any different in justification from what the dynastic state used to justify the Divine Right of Kings, as Jean Bodin gives it:

Because there is nothing greater on earth, after God, than the sovereign princes, (the middle class?), and that they are established by him as his lieutenants, to rule over other men, it is necessary to have due regard for their status so as to respect and obey their majesty in all obedience, and to speak of them in honourable terms: for whoever shows contempt for his sovereign prince shows contempt for God, of whom he is the image on earth.<sup>6</sup>

Hobbes advocates the rule of one physical person, and believes that organized society is opposed to the state of nature. To achieve social harmony therefore it will take the rule of an artificial man, *Leviathan*, wielding unlimited and irrevocable power.<sup>7</sup> The frightening scenario is one of *Leviathan* big-footing into all human affairs, universalizing itself and reducing everyone else to trembling silence. Citizenship after Hobbes' theory would be marked by terror and anxiety under the watchful eye of the Orwellian ubiquitous 'Big Brother'.<sup>8</sup>

There is another element in Hobbes' theory that could be a source of worry. It is his understanding of the human person in terms of either an actor/mask or an author. Hobbes leaves the question of personal responsibility ambivalent, since if people claimed the authorship of the actions of the Sovereign to whom they irrevocably transferred their right of nature, they would in effect be responsible for the consequences of the actions he would perform on their behalf.<sup>9</sup> The ambiguity lies in the fact that while exercising unlimited executive powers, he or she would in reality be doing so as an *actor* rather than an *author*. Hobbes provides that he would be immuned from any negative consequences that might arise from the actions he or she might have taken.

In Rousseau, humankind is collectivized, and individual persons abnegate their autonomy. Thus the price of citizenship in Rousseau's theory is the "total alienation of each associate with all his rights to the whole community."<sup>10</sup> It is frightening to think of a citizenry of zombies. This is further aggravated by the paradoxical idea of 'forced freedom',<sup>11</sup> which is impossible to reconcile with the normal understanding of freedom as implied in the normal meaning of democracy. There is also the idea of the 'General Will', which Rousseau denies as amounting to consensus.<sup>12</sup> The latter is the mainstay of decision making in both traditional and contemporary Nigerian society.

The legacy of citizenship according to Rousseau's theory will be tantamount to the people being present as mere cogs in the political wheel without any corresponding will, choice or decision to show for it. Before them all is the leader, having the attributes of a god, who *decides* what the will of the people is or *should be*. Him the people would be obliged to obey. Nigeria has already lived through several 'leaders' of this description and would now rather do without any further ones.

At the opposite pole of the issue is the concept of popular sovereignty as expressed in the theories of Voltaire, Montesquieu, the Encyclopedists, and Marx. One should not be overawed by a grandiose sovereignty that exists in slogans alone. Not one known political system has been able to put into practice the complete ideal of popular sovereignty -- Power to the People -- which is the kernel of democracy.

Furthermore, there is also the idea of the Common Good as the end of government. Each theory claims the ability to realize it in its application; yet there is no agreement among them as to what the common good consists in. Each system defines it on the basis of its own presuppositions and according to the protagonist's own ideological leaning. A conservative's idea of property or freedom or defence etc for the common good is often diametrically opposed to what the liberal or socialist would propose. It

seems that all political leanings, right, left and centre, appeal to nothing else in their references as much as they appeal to the ideals of democracy, freedom, and common good. Each claims to be democratic, yet democracy seems to elude them all.

Political theories are reflections on the social and political developments in their society. They are generally their authors' response to these developments.<sup>13</sup> They are not meant to be dose-administered to any society different from their place of origin. If they must, it has to be after a period of vigorous scrutiny and adaptation. The citizens of the recipient community should have the final decision as to what suits, or does not suit, their own needs.<sup>14</sup>

#### **b. Western Democracy Applied**

It is said that democracy rules the world. To rule the world it must operate a system of justice and base its authority on the express will of the people. The style of democracy that rules the Western world does not appear to be suitable for Africa because the features it manifests do not appear to the average African to be either just or democratic. One need only consider the international bodies like the United Nations with the five most powerful countries taking on to themselves the exclusive status of 'Permanent' membership to its Security Council. They exercise the power of veto over any resolutions arrived at by the majority of member nations when such resolutions do not suit their political or economic interests. Even at its face value, that does not look very democratic. It is like one arm of a country's government -- say the executive -- overruling entire parliamentary decisions to go its own way.

On the national level one needs also to look at the structure of the multi-party states where the views of the opposition count for nothing and the winner takes all at all times in favour of the ruling party. That makes it difficult to separate narrow party interests from the broader national interests which every government should serve. The result is that the dreaded dictatorship of the despotic individual is replaced by an 'elected' dictatorship of the party in power. The Rousseau Sovereign thus resurfaces under another name. The interesting thing is that most of the time it seems that what wins votes is more by the candidate's ability to sway opinions through eloquent political speech-making than through the actual disposition to deliver what they promise. This is not the style of democracy Nigeria wants for the people are used to decision-making via consensus, and to appoint public servants on the basis of personal merit.

Practically speaking, a multi-party government is perhaps not the best thing for Nigeria, at least at her present stage of political development. This assertion might be surprising to some people, but there are a variety of reasons for this conclusion:

First of all, there is too much hassle and the electorate, made up of a vast majority of uneducated, ill-educated and politically rustic citizens, is left in confusion. It cannot cope with a plethora of parties with really no substantial difference in ideology.

Secondly, it seems that the multi-party system will polarize rather than unite the country. Nigeria's great problem is with existing polarization along ethnic, linguistic and religious lines. A polarized political set-up will be the *coup de grâce* against the fragile links that at present seem to bind the country together. In most of the countries where the multi-party system is at work, it seems that at some stage in their history there had to be a charismatic leader that would gather the scattered bits and weld them together. Washington did it for the United States, Franco for Spain, Bismarck for Germany, De Gaulle for France, and Mussolini for Italy. Nigeria must be able to come together first under one banner, under a strong but good and patriotic leader. Only then would it be possible to diversify methods without the danger of rapid disintegration. As Rousseau, quoting Grotius in Chapter V of his Social Contract, said:

(Only) a people...can give itself to a king... A people is a people before it gives itself. The gift is itself a civil act, and implies public deliberation. It would be better, before examining the act by which a people gives itself to a king, to examine that by which it has become a people; for this act, being necessarily prior to the other, is the true foundation of society.<sup>15</sup>

Thirdly, all party politics brings about the element of partisanship in dealing with issues and objectivity goes to the wind as party loyalty most frequently overrides personal sense of judgment, and the desire to 'keep one's job' becomes the overriding concern.<sup>16</sup>

Fourthly, technically speaking, the element of consent which is so crucial in any democratic process is distorted in a multi-party arrangement by the reliance on a majority rather than a consensus. In a majority-oriented set-up the majority, which is nevertheless a part, is treated as though it were the whole, and the minority is expected to conform to every determination of the majority and get lost in the majority. The fact that the majority has, not infrequently, been proven wrong by events, makes an institutionalized majority-is-all assume the face of tyranny.<sup>17</sup>

Fifthly and finally, the multi-party system just does not seem to work in Africa and some other geographic zones. It is not quite correct to suggest that the failure is due to the people's incompetence alone. It is probably reasonable to suggest that its failure is because it seems to be unsuited to the people's way of thinking and operating at their present level of development. It seems to be a grave mistake to think that the multi-party system, often referred to as 'Western-style Democracy' is the only, or even the best type of democracy. If anything it is only one out of many possible types of democracy. Other people must be allowed to apply their talent in working out a pattern of 'government of the people, by the people, and for the people' according to their own understanding and as their own peculiar circumstances demand. Those who do not want, or are unsuited to the 'Western-Style Democracy' must be given a fair chance to demonstrate an alternative.<sup>18</sup> Perhaps what they come up with might be of benefit to politics even in the West. Provided that a system protects the life, liberty and property of citizens, and provided it is what the people want, the question of multi-party or dual-party or non-party is a matter of modality and should not occupy the centre stage.

The proper business of education includes among others to civilize each oncoming generation by putting at its disposal the wisdom which humankind has accumulated by experiment and thought, and to train them to be able to evaluate both the past and the present in order to achieve a clearer understanding of the truth. The legacy of the West as well as the contributions of such persons as Nyerere will enable Nigerians to come to grips with their own situation. So far it seems that the question of citizenship education has not received much emphasis in Nigeria's agenda. A distinctively Nigerian approach will, through the school, provide the groundwork for reversing the trend so that within the professional life which follows after schooling, citizens will have the opportunity to put into effect what they learnt from books and classrooms. They will exercise their citizenship and identify with the democratic process which has become the recognised hallmark of decision-making in contemporary political society.

The exercise of citizenship manifests itself in the enlightened combination of willingness to support and sustain democracy and to reject governmental tyranny.<sup>19</sup> This combination is perhaps one of the greatest implications of patriotism. Any genuine commitment to democracy must be on-going, because any true democracy must aim at conscious social reproduction whereby a democratic state tries to equip its future citizens to make democratic decisions in their turn.



In the Western world, (and now in the Eastern Bloc as well), the ballot box has been the mechanism used to determine who rules and who stays out of office. In Nigeria, some members of the military establishment have for most of Nigeria's political life as a sovereign state, decided that the ballot box will not be applied in Nigeria, and persistently held to power without the clear mandate of the people. They then proceeded to place government above the people and to exercise unlimited and unrestrained *fiat* in every department of the people's life. Citizenship education is capable of putting an end to such anomalies. When the modern democratic process becomes fully operational in Nigeria, the citizens will work out a mechanism for checking, and if necessary forestalling, any incipient tendency in some individuals to try and assume absolute power without the people's mandate. Happily the people are less and less intimidated by the military and have, even without the ballot box, been able to make unbridled autocracy an inconvenient enterprise, to say the least. For instance the whole Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) issue was bitterly contested by the people and the government was forced into the defensive.

Furthermore, when it came to taking the International Monetary Fund IMF loan in 1986, Nigerians were able to come out strongly against it in a referendum of sorts,<sup>20</sup> so that the government had to change its mind. And when journalist Dele Giwa was blown up by an assassin's letter bomb and the people suspected that the government had some knowledge of what happened, the people never stopped screaming until the government was forced to commence an official investigation into the allegations. The Nigerian people have already begun to take their own destiny in their own hands. The military government has already given a pledge to return power to the people by October 1992. That hopefully should be their last appearance on the political scene. In fairness to the military government, steps are being taken to ensure that the hand-over is permanent and the transition smoothly effected.<sup>21</sup> The Administration took at least three major steps that are indicative of a seriousness of purpose:

First, there was the quite successful four-year-long period of political education campaign organized under government auspices, extending to the village level, and designed to expose Nigerians to the purpose and meaning of democracy.

Second, there was the generally applauded decision to break with the past discredited political experiments by excluding from the new political order all politicians associated with the governments of the past. People were then to form new political associations from among whom two would eventually be approved.<sup>22</sup>

Third, the government set a schedule whereby elections would be held in four stages spread out over a period of three years:

i) the local government elections; ii) the state legislature; iii) the state governorships; iv) the Federal legislature; v) the presidential elections.

This three-step programme, at least in its conception, is manifestly a clear movement towards restoring to the people the full savour of the sovereignty that belongs to them in virtue of their citizenship of their country. It is through the exercise of sovereignty that the people, rather than an aristocracy, can take their national destiny into their own hands. It is a truism that the country is its citizens, and there can be nothing, no government or aristocracy, that should reckon itself as superior to them.

### **c. Pluralism and Political Systems**

From the political and ideological points of view, pluralism is a factor that no one may casually ignore, for there is no system that is completely immune from its challenges. Moreover, there is no system that is without its own flaws. Though Western Europe and North America have the tendency to claim to operate the true democracy, theirs is only a version of democracy -- the parliamentary version. Every country on earth claims to operate a democracy but the results are as diverse as the countries' circumstances themselves.

Not too long ago, the vast majority of French Catholics had stuck to the theory of the divine right of kings and were resolutely opposed to democratic republicanism which, ironically today, the same vast majority consider as their touchstone of democracy. The Marxists, on the other hand, believed that supreme happiness for humankind would only result from a classless society under the dictatorship of the proletariat, and under the guidance of the communist party. Recent developments in Eastern Europe have shown that that is not to be any more. The Americans were as convinced of the 'divine right of democracy', so to speak, and would pride themselves -- often to the irritation of some -- as the world's greatest democracy. They would often proceed, almost with holy zeal to seek to propagate, and if necessary impose, their own ideas of democracy around the world.

On the left of the political spectrum, the Soviets have had until quite recently an all-too-similar attitude with regard to socialism which is their own brand of 'people's' democracy. Now the Soviet empire is rapidly dissolving into separate, sovereign republics, each invoking the name of democracy. The confusion generated in the mirage

chase for 'democracy' around the world leaves the image of democracy not a little tainted by scepticism in the consciousness of many as to whether it could ever be found in a pure form.

As Ignace Lepp rightly points out,<sup>23</sup> there is no political regime that has divine sanction guaranteed in advance; no regime that is alone legitimate or at the best for all peoples at each stage of their evolution. Political morality like the morality of property must take into consideration that humanity is certainly one, but that this is a unity in an infinite diversity. It is futile to moralize or speculate, or appeal to stereotypes in regard to imaginary excellences that make 'democracy' work in some places, and the absence of which prevents the monolithic 'democracy' from working in other places. If such stereotypes are anything to go by, then the Hitlers, Mussolinis, and Francos of the not-too-distant past should have sprung from some stock other than the Nordic stock.

And as Ignace Lepp concludes, it would be a mistake to wish to apply the same system, in the name of a static and abstract political morality, to nations that have not attained the same degree of maturity.<sup>24</sup>

Even though one might morally object to the dictatorship of communist countries, yet a pseudo-democratic regime could never have accomplished in Russia what the now wobbling communism did<sup>25</sup>. In Africa the 'Peoples Democracies' have failed in Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Benin; just as the 'liberal' democracies have, in practically all of Africa including Nigeria, failed to answer the precise needs of the people. It will be simplistic to say that the fault is totally that of the people. It is more realistic to consider the situation as analogous to that of a square peg which does not fit snugly into a round hole.

With the multi-party government not considered as the best option for a country like Nigeria, the question arises as to what alternative system one might propose in its place. The alternative that is most likely to be conjured up in the minds of many is the one-party government. For psychological reasons of the great scare conventional wisdom has come to associate with it, it is probably not the best idea to advocate a one-party system either. To begin with, such a proposal is not likely to find favour from many people even though it is in itself not necessarily always bad. The idea of a one-party state sends chills down the spines of many who have learnt – not without justification – to associate it only with despotism.

Technically speaking, however, the greatest setback for a one-party rule is the reductionist presupposition that the whole nation is suddenly equivalent to a party of a

few bureaucrats who inflict their will on the people; and who presume to speak for the people without the people ever having the chance to speak for themselves. Space is wanting to pursue this point in greater detail; and so it seems sufficient to simply say that a one-party rule is not the best alternative either. A non-party form of government seems to be the best option. This will be discussed later in Chapter Six.

## 2. Western Ethical Theories (of Virtue)

Western ethical theories have been largely characterised by individualism and an emphasis on decision-making. In contrast, Nigeria operates with an emphasis on the community rather than the individual, that makes Western theories less appealing than they should be. The recent focus on virtues in Western ethical theories, however, may have more to offer. Taking their departure from a plurality of backgrounds: religious, ethnic, linguistic, historical, educational, Nigeria should approach Western ethical theories with the same sensitivity and discernment with which she approaches Western political theories. Because of the nature of ethical theories and based on the history and background behind each, it is almost impossible to find an all-perfect one against which others should be measured. A federated approach would do greater justice to each theory than a pick-and-choose approach would since it does not set one theory against the other but recognises the integrity of each and seeks to rescue from each what is useful, reasonable and appropriate.

Graham Haydon's three lessons drawn from critics of ethical theory, are quite pertinent in illustrating the above point. As he rightly points out, it is impossible to show any positive ethical theory to be 'correct', independently of some particular tradition of theorizing, and to everyone's satisfaction. Besides, ethical life does not consist for the most part in applying theories, but must include dispositions, that is, virtues. Nevertheless, morality does not rest on the decisions of autonomous detached individuals. To the extent that individuals do make decisions in a way detached from any tradition, this is a feature of certain societies, and not one that has to be approved.<sup>26</sup>

Ethical theories can provide a resource by which, where there is disagreement, people can think their way to a resolution. Thus, concludes Haydon, what theories need to be is not *true*, but *agreed* -- amongst the persons who face the problems.<sup>27</sup>

In their discussion of the theme of virtue, Western ethical theories branch out into at least four general tendencies. One tendency identifies virtue or the virtuous life with

obedience to the moral law; a second tendency associates it with the upholding of values; a third emphasizes the epistemological approach by identifying virtue with the acquisition of knowledge; and a fourth tendency links virtue with imitating the examples of others.

#### **a. Virtue As Obedience to the Law**

Aristotle had identified the just (virtuous) with the law-abiding and the unjust (vicious) with the law-breaker. His reason? The laws make pronouncements on every sphere of life, and their aim is to secure either the common good of all or of the best. Furthermore, he argues, the great majority of lawful acts are ordinances which are based on virtue as a whole.<sup>28</sup>

The traditional way of grounding the moral law is by taking God to be its giver. He is the agent who creates obligations by his acts of legislation, but some modern philosophers are disinclined to allow God this role. Even when they admit that God exists and gives laws, they tend to think that being moral requires that a person make a judgment that he or she morally ought to obey the divine law. Thus while God perhaps tells us what we ought to do, it is not his saying so that makes it obligatory. It is obligatory because, and only because, it is moral (Kant).

Kant inherited the Christian reverence for divine law and the worth of the individual self. According to Kant moral philosophy is properly concerned not with what is, but with what ought to be. In humans, there is a sense of duty: the "I ought" or the moral law, which is logically prior to experience and which springs from a person's innermost nature. The moral law results from the will governed by reason and brings people into contact with the very order of the universe itself, since the laws of nature and the laws of reason are essentially one.<sup>29</sup>

Thomas Hobbes, a lawyer by profession, goes further on the theme of natural law and justice. He considers obedience to the law and being virtuous as two aspects of the same thing. For him the concepts of justice and injustice arise only when there is some coercive power to compel people to keep their covenant of transference of their natural rights to the commonwealth. Bringing the two concepts of law and morals together he relates justice and injustice with righteousness and unrighteousness. Justice itself he distinguishes into justice of manners which he calls virtue (with its opposite as vice), and justice of actions which "denominates men, not just, but guiltless... and the injustice of the same... gives them but the name of guilty".<sup>30</sup>

René Descartes before him had set himself on the path of intelligently assessing values before espousing them. The world, he thought, is composed of two kinds of minds: those who, believing themselves cleverer than they are, cannot avoid precipitate judgments and never direct all their thoughts in an orderly manner; and those who have enough reason or modesty to recognize that they are less capable of distinguishing the true from the false than others by whom they can be taught. The latter should be content to follow the opinions of these others rather than seek opinions of these others themselves.<sup>31</sup>

Once Descartes had arrived at this conclusion, he decided that it was compatible with growth and maturity to:

- (i) obey the laws and customs of his country, holding to the religion in which he was brought up;
- (ii) be as firm and decisive in his actions as he could, and follow even the most doubtful opinions once adopted, with no less constancy than if they had been quite certain;
- (iii) master himself rather than fortune, and change his desires rather than the order of the world;
- (iv) review the various occupations of men in order to choose the best.<sup>32</sup>

Like Descartes and Kant, many philosophers and theologians are wont to extol the virtues of obedience to the law in terms that leave no doubt that breaking the law is also breaking the moral obligation. Nevertheless, there is a distinction between the moral and the legal obligation. As Burton Leiser points out<sup>33</sup>, high as the duty to obey the law may be, where there is a conflict between one's moral duty and one's legal duty, most people believe that the moral duty takes precedence. The moral operates on the level of the conscience and the legal is measured by the letter of the law.

The distinction between the purely legal and the moral can be seen when we consider that society is not necessarily better with an increased number of legal practitioners or legislators unless they are at the same time moral. In other words to practise law is not the same as to practice justice in the sense of uprightness, and society could be better off with citizens who are just or upright than with those who merely practise the law. On the other hand, and especially in the major religions -- Christianity, Islam, Judaism -- morality comes in the form of law. Jesus talks of the new commandment to love one

another<sup>34</sup> and Paul considers love as the greatest of all the virtues<sup>35</sup>. The distinction between the purely legal and the purely moral does not amount to a dichotomy. As Locke points out in his *The Spirit of Toleration*, "moral actions belong to the jurisdiction both of the outward and inward court, both of the civil and domestic governor,... both of the magistrate and the conscience."

#### **b. Obedience to the Law and Personal Autonomy**

Obedience to the law seems to be at odds with personal autonomy. The question is whether and to what extent one could obey the law and still claim personal autonomy. Man's fundamental moral obligation is to govern his life by reasons which receive their specific content from a consideration of human interests and needs. In effect, if obedience to an authority is to be morally justifiable, it must be because it is humanly reasonable to obey, and not simply because it is a command. In other words the one commanded has to have identified with the object of the command on the basis that it is reasonable, needful, and better than its opposite.

If what is commanded is not humanly reasonable, then to obey would be materially wrong and therefore not in the human interest.<sup>36</sup> If there were not need that the command be given, then to obey would be formally wrong and thereby a surrender of human autonomy. Therefore, if someone is to have the right to command another, this right can possibly be justified only in an area in which it is reasonable that someone else's judgment be followed.<sup>37</sup> Since circumstances abound where someone else's judgment is called into play, it is in the interest of personal autonomy that it be supplemented by an openness to the other which enables one to follow the directions or commands of another without necessarily jeopardizing autonomy. That is why when one obeys authority, it is not merely because the authority appears to have good and sufficient reasons to command, but over and above because the one who obeys *sees* the reason for obeying. Authority is not an alternative to reason but is grounded in it. This openness or disposition is not innate, nor is it immediately intuitively acquired. It is enhanced by teaching, which frequently involves elements of practical instruction or training, and at times legislation.

Teaching provides the impetus, while personal growth and maturity sort out the applications as life unfolds. Freedom is not incompatible with law. Even though the element of autonomy is crucial in the sphere of moral development it does not operate right from the beginning. The normative element which demands conformity comes

first for, as Kohlberg points out, every individual has to go through the "good boy" stage of morality before he or she can attain moral autonomy. It could also be referred to what Freud says about the super ego stage of development whereby children come to enjoy following rules and to revel in the sense of mastery that this gives them.<sup>38</sup>

In contemporary times, many educators seem to deny these facts of experience. As a result the young are from the beginning brought up with greater emphasis on the empirical, hypothetical, experimental approach to everything. They thus have the tendency to judge actions and occurrences only by their consequences. However, those judgments must be formed by principles if they are to escape the grip of arbitrariness. The young get to know correct and incorrect procedures as they conform with, or depart from, the empirical laws of science.

Situation ethics is a substantial departure from the trend of identifying virtue with obedience to the moral law. Also referred to as Contextual ethics, or the New Morality, it is associated with Rudolf Bultmann, John A. T. Robinson, and Joseph Fletcher. These contemporary theologians share certain ideas with the "God is dead" movement, which maintains that the archaic biblical conception of God is no longer applicable to the experience of modern people. Their main emphasis is on the primacy of love as the guiding principle for society. They are more concerned with the ethics than the metaphysics of Christian thought, and even if religious belief entirely disappeared they would still want to salvage the ethics of love and not throw out the baby with the bath water.<sup>39</sup> They therefore want God redefined leaving out the archaic concept of a law-giver, a righteous God who gives humans codes engraved on stone tablets and specific dictums for the governance of their lives.

Situation ethics gives the individual total discretion in all circumstances such that anything and everything is subject to, and dependent upon, the context to determine whether or not a particular principle or value should be applied. The determining principle of action is whether love is better served than law.<sup>40</sup> It operates on the principle of compromise, since everything is negotiable if by so doing the purpose of love is served. The risk that goes with this is that individuals are likely to exaggerate their discretionary abilities and lose sight of objectivity. Even love itself must be recognizable objectively as love and not simply what an agent regards as love. This theory also tends towards reducing love into simply what brings about pleasure or what alleviates pain. But love's content goes beyond hedonism. A further point to note here is that the theory tends to regard the law with cynicism as though it were always



crippling of human discretion and reason. But experience shows that in society that is already evolved and complex, convention has a wider application than mere discretion, since most of the time people have to deal with other people on strictly business lines without any need to have a close acquaintance with them.

### **c. Virtue through the Upholding of Values**

The attainment of virtue might be realized by the upholding of the positive values of society. Positive values in this respect refers primarily to those values which bring to the fore what is best in humans and for humans as embodied in the United Nations Bill of Rights -- life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. True virtue is one which is realized in concrete life. Thus the virtues sought in a society are closely linked with, and dictated by, the values upheld in that society. The school seeks to cultivate selected virtues in the young by means of both the subject matter of the course and the methods that it employs in its unfolding.

In concrete life though there can be a conflict of values in the moral agent.<sup>41</sup> The values of the agent's professional life might be in conflict with that of his or her religious, political, social and familial life. There is the famous case of John F. Kennedy when he became President of the United States. To reassure Congress about his single-mindedness with regard to his position, he declared that if there ever would come a time when his conscience was in conflict with his constitutional duty, he would resign from office.<sup>42</sup> Kennedy, however, cautiously added that such a conflict was unlikely to arise. In the larger community, especially in a pluralist society, the situation is even more complex as the agent is required to respond to the conflicting demands of conflicting interests. Is it, for example, a breach of family loyalty and trust to refrain from discussion sensitive national security issues that one comes across in the normal process of one's job? The ethical principles one has imbibed will enable him or her to cope successfully with such conflicts.

In education, as in other human arts, those actions the child performs under direction become more intelligent, more deliberate and less mechanical as he or she grows up. The child being educated receives the subject matter through the methods available in the school. His or her awareness is usually in proportion to his or her level of development but it improves, matures and becomes more significant with time and understanding. What begins as an undifferentiated assemblage of unrelated facts gradually sorts itself out in the understanding as a cohesive body of principles significant

for living. In principle the pupil first gets to know *that*, and then in the course of time gets to know the *how* and perhaps the *why*.

As John L. Childs points out<sup>43</sup>, a values structure of things considered significant, worthwhile, and right -- operates in endless response to the behaviour of pupils. Many of these educational values concern the very fundamentals of human existence. They have to do with such elemental things as the rights, responsibilities, beliefs, tastes, appreciations, faiths and allegiances of human beings. Thus, as the young are introduced to the various aspects of human experience, attitudes and habits of response to them are set in motion. Since values are by definition goods desired for their own sakes and not contrived, our best attitude to them is to try and identify with them as societal givens, which are not subject to our individual whims to manipulate or change at will. We therefore try to uphold them for their own sakes and later hand them on to succeeding generations.

The process of selecting and rejecting, of distinguishing the desirable from the undesirable is unending in education. It is this process of choice that defines what is meant by the term *moral* in connection with necessary choices among genuine life alternatives. These choices necessarily have consequences in the lives of the young and, through them, in the life of larger society. People become knowledgeable about values as they become aware of the consequences to which their actions lead. As John Dewey points out<sup>44</sup>, not all of the things that are immediately liked are likable, nor all the desired things really desirable. The difference between the merely desired and that which is counted desirable is the difference between organic and impulsive acts, and those acts whose conditions and consequences have been judged to be good.

One consequence of this development is a distrust of any authority that cannot be proven or verified. Parental, seigniorial and religious authority no longer hold their traditional clout. The concepts of good, evil, sin, moral and immoral are either relativized or assume more decreased relevance in daily living. New concepts come into application: mental health, authenticity, self fulfilment, motivation, and self realization. The conviction is rapidly gaining ground in the Socratic spirit that in order to be moral one must have to be intelligent, and in order to be intelligent one must have the capacity to take a critical account of actual life's alternatives. In this new frame of mind the question is how to identify the values that motivate action.

Values that motivate action can be theoretical, economic, social, religious, political or even aesthetic. John Locke provides for three types of laws, namely, the divine law,

the civil law, and the law of opinion and reputation. These three types cover all human motivations in every sphere of life -- religious, civil, and behavioral.<sup>45</sup> The concurrence with which these types of laws are meant to operate underscores on the one hand, Locke's dedication to pluralism and, on the other hand, the futility of seeking to compartmentalize human action and motivation. In the process of education the student learns to choose from among these or from combinations according as his or her special circumstances demand.

Child-centred educators like Rousseau and his successors think that each stage of education has its own values, and that adults should not try to impose their own values on children. This point of view seems to ignore the fact of continuity in human nature and experience. Each person does not have to experience the world from zero. That would be stunting. We need education in order to be able to evaluate and choose properly from among the many alternatives available already in the moral community. Moreover, if something is valuable, it does not become so because children rather than adults are concerned with it and vice versa.

#### **d. Virtue as Knowledge**

Socrates believed that virtue consists somewhat in knowledge.<sup>46</sup> This meaning is recaptured in Nicia's interjection: I have often heard you say a man is good in those things about which he is wise, and bad in those things of which he is ignorant.<sup>47</sup> This interjection boils down to the cerebralization of moral education - namely that theoretical knowledge of the Forms of the Good is sufficient to make one good. The resulting Socratic conclusion that all vice is essentially error and all wrong-doing a mistake could not be sustained when one contrasts the activities of evil geniuses like Hitler and Stalin, with the tremendous amount of good done by such intellectually less-acclaimed people like John Mary Vianney<sup>48</sup>.

Aristotle rejects the Platonic idea that the end of life is the Form of Good which is the source of all goodness wherever it is found in the universe. "Good" for Aristotle has no meaning common to all applications, and there is no form of good separate from its particular manifestations. The kind of good that makes humans good must be chosen for its own sake and never as a means to something else. It should be able to render life worthy of being chosen.<sup>49</sup> Aristotle's position is a protest against the ascetic, Manichaean view which condemns all natural impulses, and against the naturalistic view which elevates them above criticism and adopts them as the guide of life. These

impulses are neither good nor bad in themselves; what is needed is the right amount, at the right time, in the right manner; and the right object for each.<sup>50</sup> Aristotle distinguishes between moral and intellectual virtue, and recognizes that while moral virtue can be achieved on one's own by habit or *ethos* -- becoming just by doing just deeds, and a harpist by playing the harp -- intellectual virtue comes through teaching.<sup>51</sup> Hence, some form of authority is required for effective inculcation of virtue.

A number of Western writers are not completely satisfied with the prescriptive, normative approach to the inculcation of virtue. They call for alternative methods. They point out that ethical theories fail in at least three respects:

1. They fail to examine motives and the motivational structures and constraints of ethical life.
2. They fail by making it impossible for one to achieve the good in an integrated way, and instead pick and choose aspects of the mind or body as their area of operation.
3. They put one in a position that is psychologically uncomfortable, difficult, or even untenable, and make life fragmented and incoherent.

Alasdair MacIntyre draws attention to the bankruptcy of modern moral philosophy in its failure to provide a clear guide for moral conduct: it is "nothing but endless moral debates with no side winning the rational argument since there is no common moral tradition."<sup>52</sup> We are all inheritors of fragments -- often mutually inconsistent -- of moral traditions and philosophies. In Michael Stocker's assessment it was a case of cosmic schizophrenia whereby each moral theory provides separate reasons for ethical action: egoism says self-interest is a good reason; utilitarianism says that the well-being of the greatest number is a good reason; hedonism says pleasure is a good reason.<sup>53</sup> This is the background that gave rise to the so-called psychological and anthropological turn in moral theorizing. They ask less about the nature and foundations of moral rules and language and more about the nature and traits of the moral person.<sup>54</sup> This would culminate in the so-called authenticity theory.

The aim of these theories is to produce people who are capable of responsible conduct, and who can judge for themselves what they ought or ought not to do. This is not inconsistent with the ethics of principles which does not intend to turn human

beings into 'Pavlov's Dogs'. The test of a formed character is precisely the capacity to hold one's own in the midst of life's moral challenges. One is placed in a historical situation in the face of a changing environment where every occasion presents a fresh challenge. In the midst of moral crisis, the individual must decide whether his or her encounter with the cultural tradition inherent in his or her moral practice will take the form of rejection or critical acceptance.<sup>55</sup> It is in this possibility of critical acceptance or total rejection that the element of freedom is evidenced. That is why we can talk of the law of freedom.

It seems rather implausible to reject the normative, prescriptive approach in the formation of character merely on the pretext that it is legalistic and authoritarian and leaves no room for freedom. Even freedom itself is identifiable under the aspect of law -- the law of freedom. In Plato's *Crito*, Socrates vigorously defends the view that the violation of the laws of state is also a violation of the highest moral norms, and that even if the law works to one's disadvantage one still has the moral -- not just legal -- duty to uphold it. It is a sustained teaching of scholastic philosophers like Aquinas and Suarez, and later by Locke, that it is the divine law that constitutes the eternal foundation of morality and that, by the intervention of inferior laws derived from divine law, introduce moral values even into things indifferent.<sup>56</sup> This traditional explanation though no longer of topical, interest in moral philosophical discussion, is still upheld by many. It is however relevant in Nigeria since in traditional life the moral is legal and the legal moral. As Bernard Williams points out<sup>57</sup>, someone who has a particular virtue performs actions because they fall under certain prescriptions and avoids others because they fall under other prescriptions. That person is described in terms of virtue, and so are his or her actions. Thus he or she is a just or courageous person who does just or courageous things. The benevolent or kind-hearted person does benevolent and kind-hearted things.

#### **e. Virtue through Examples: Paradigmatic Individuals**

Since, in real life people in their daily activities tend to copy the behaviour of others whom they admire or who influence their lives, the role of paradigmatic individuals requires some mention. When it comes to individuals, there are role models, but when someone's moral influence pervades a whole culture or environment or epoch, such a one is more than a role model but forms a whole blueprint according to which moral conduct can be judged. Such people have been referred to as paradigmatic individuals.

The great pioneer of this concept was Karl Jaspers who in 1952 discussed the issue. Seventeen years later in 1969, Antonio S. Cua took up the discussion. Following after Jaspers, Cua lists among his paradigmatic individuals the following: Socrates, Buddha, Confucius and Jesus.<sup>58</sup> These people are characteristically moral pioneers; charismatic in temperament, with a sense of devotion to a mission, and a confidence in the rightness of their mission. Through their lives and their utterances these people inspire others and moral codes have arisen based on their teachings.

Though admirably creative in the moral sphere, these individuals were not known for lawlessness. Rather they used their own insights to transform their environment. They would transfuse the content of their moral tradition with their own insights and give the principles, implicit in their moral practice, a substance and meaningful content with a style that was all their own.<sup>59</sup> That sometimes put them into trouble with the purists of their tradition. Socrates and Jesus paid the ultimate price for their efforts.

A number of problems arise with the theory of paradigmatic individuals:

1. To start with, the individuals mentioned, with the exception of Socrates, are connected with some religion or other. Protagonists of a secular morality could hardly be willing to distinguish between the purely ethical and the religious element in their teaching.
2. Moreover, they are bound up with the ancient times and their theories can be charged with anachronism with regard to present-day developments.
3. Furthermore, the very fact of their being confined to antiquity would give rise to the conclusion that generations after them till the present have been moral drones incapable of any moral creativity.
4. Besides, they could hardly claim an experience wide enough as to warrant that their teachings have a universal applicability.
5. Finally, the growing sensitivity to apparent male chauvinism would lead feminists to be aggravated by the claim that only males have been capable of being considered paradigmatic for the whole human race -- at least as far as the list of paradigmatic individuals goes.

If one were to agree with the role of paradigmatic individuals it has to be possible to widen the parameters. It must be possible to find one or several within any given culture or epoch. Nigerians should be able to find at least one among their own people and for their own time. The Catholic Church has the practice of canonizing saints, whom they set up as exemplars of good, holy living. Every society has its own heroes whose achievements they celebrate. Today, we have people like Mother Theresa of Calcutta shining out for the whole world. In quite recent times people like Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., and Archbishop Oscar Romero have shone out sufficiently enough as to make the whole world take notice and acknowledge their influence. Through the ages people have shone out that have had a decisive impact on the society's way of seeing things. A new star might be arising in Gorbachev as his influence has changed the whole concept of communism and international relations. If what we want of paradigmatic individuals is their life story, then that belongs to the history books; but if we want their moral example, we are already on our way back to moral codes whose critics suggest the use of examples rather than precepts.

It might be useful at this stage to take a careful and critical look at the overall purpose of paradigmatic individuals. Susan Wolf did just that in an article she captioned "Moral Saints".<sup>60</sup> In this fascinating article, Wolf described the moral saint as "a person whose every action is as morally good as possible, a person, that is, who is as morally worthy as can be." Wolf goes beyond actions and would enquire into motives. What if they derive the greatest happiness from achieving happiness in others? Or, as Rousseau asserted before her, what if all those commendable actions were only motivated by vanity?<sup>61</sup> What if what makes them happy is the total neglect of their own personal comforts in the light of the overriding importance he or she gives to the wider concerns of morality? On all three counts, they could be said to be pursuing their personal interest. For this reason, Wolf does not find moral saintliness a model of personal well-being toward which it would be good or desirable to strive.<sup>62</sup>

Wolf's scepticism about possible aberrations in motivation is quite understandable. For instance, the prevailing opinion of Socrates or Jesus or the Buddha is very high, not out of any conspiracy, but for the fact that their positive influences have far outweighed any negative traits some people might be wont to attribute to them. Thus, for instance, Xenophon makes of Socrates a stupid, good man; Aristophanes (in the *Clouds*), makes of him a clever, bad man; while Plato sees him as a wise, good man<sup>63</sup>.

The Platonic image has tended to command the field. The point being made here is that what leads to their being considered as paradigmatic is their overall impact in spite of any isolated personal character traits. Having already stood the test and scrutiny of sceptics, they have emerged stronger than ever. They had their critics, sometimes very bitter ones, with respect to their style, their claims and their motivation, yet they stand generally beyond reproach in spite of all. In the case of Socrates just cited, by weaving the accounts of Aristophanes and Xenophon around the Platonic Socrates in order to make a single character, what emerges is a sort of secular saint who out-sophisticated the sophists and raised a structure of knowledge, or confidence of knowledge, upon a foundation too weak in other hands to support more than changing opinion.<sup>64</sup>

In conclusion, it must be said that with or without paradigmatic individuals, the individual has access to the moral principle for the purpose of acquiring good moral habits and dispositions. To hold otherwise would imply that the individual is only morally adrift, devoid of the capacity for personal discernment, and incapable of any moral creativity in his or her personal life. The individual should both draw from, and contribute to, the larger society such qualities as moral leadership, pioneering activity and commitment to affirmative action. By so doing he or she adds to that variety that characterizes life in a community of persons. As Antonio S. Cua points out: personal, ideal-embedded principles are not necessarily disruptive of social equilibrium, but may be articulations of the participant's understanding of the inherited core of common ethical knowledge. The individual bears the responsibility of reasonable persuasion in advocating his or her principles as *the* correct or sound interpretation of what is deemed implicit in common ethical knowledge.<sup>65</sup>

### 3. Western Understanding of Religion

Western accounts of religion are based predominantly on a Christian tradition and the various points of view ultimately give a broader understanding of the role of religion. Those who oppose religious education base their objections largely on such allegations as that religion is a delusion and belongs no longer to the present level of mental and scientific development of man. Some people even dismiss religion as a form of ideology, and religious education as a form of propaganda or indoctrination in furtherance of this ideology. On the pragmatic level some say that religion is relevant only to believers and should not be offered to those who do not want to be believers.



It was not until the 18th century that political theorists and philosophers began to enquire seriously as to how it comes about that men have religious beliefs. Until then, they had confined themselves to examining the doctrines of the theologians, especially their proofs of the existence of God. They accepted some, but rejected others. They sometimes expressed doubts about traditional accounts of the origins of particular religions, but had little to say about the origins of religion in general, or its place in the life of human beings. In general the Western understanding of religion can be roughly separated into such views that it is a support for morals; that it satisfies special human hungers; that it provides common values for the legitimation of the social order.

#### a. Religion as Support for Morals

Ordinarily many Western theorists approve of religion as a support of morals and deplore religious fanaticism. Machiavelli thought religion was a good thing and that "founders of religions [were] greater benefactors of humankind than the founders of states."<sup>66</sup> Most political theorists, even champions of toleration like Locke, condemned atheism. Human beings need religion to give them a sense of their place in the world, a sense of their own identity, an idea of themselves that satisfies them. Without these ideas humans, who differ from other animals in being self-conscious, would be intolerable to, and seek escape from, themselves. Religion satisfies an essential need of the (human) creature that is an object of thought to itself, and therefore aware of itself as a finite being in an infinite world.

For Rousseau, religion does not only provide humans with additional motives for behaving well, it also brings them closer together in the community of faith, consoles them when they suffer, and provides them with a conception of the place of humans in the world. These things make life worth living. Kant for his part considers religious belief among the three things necessary for humans to be moral and happy. These are belief in God, in the freedom of the will, and in the immortality of the soul.<sup>67</sup>

Fallenness is part and parcel of the human condition. In religion this state of fallenness is called sin or a falling short of the ideal. Both the Bible and the Koran acknowledge the fallenness of man. In traditional religion fallenness is also an acknowledged fact as can be shown from an Igbo proverb: *"The na-esi nkapi isi si ya n'obi; a si na o si ya n'ahu, mmiri gaara asachapu ya."* (The foul smell associated with a shrew is something from within; if it weren't, he would have been washed clean of it by the rain.)

In his analysis of Dasein's (man's) existence, Heidegger recognizes fallenness *Verfallen*<sup>66</sup> as part of the structure of man's temporal existence. Man shrinks from responsible living. He is unwilling to accept the limitations of his human heritage and to face responsibly the possibilities of his future. Fallenness is a characteristic of human existence and is transmitted, perhaps from generation to generation, by social inheritance.<sup>69</sup> The concept of fallenness is likely to give the whole discussion a religious tone reminiscent of the Judeo-Christian biblical reference to the fall of Adam and Eve. Heidegger's reference is not religious for the fact that he never linked *fallenness* to any type of moral conduct or deity.<sup>70</sup> His reference is to a failure of humans to live up to their true nature. It is an indictment of the propensity of some humans to lose themselves to the banal and unchallenging, emphasizing things, quantity, and personal power, rather than demonstrate a disciplined self-mastery that would also include a mastery of the environment.

As humans study themselves, questions of temporality, fear and dread, conscience and guilt, nothingness and death, and the like come to the fore. Heidegger's *fallenness* is characterized by (prone to) temptation, tranquillizing (*berühigend*) alienation, and self-entanglement (*Verfängt*).<sup>71</sup> One might perhaps be excused to presume some liberty in trying to express these ideas of Heidegger's in more familiar expressions like the sense of lousiness, lethargy, and incapacity. The concepts are without doubt relevant in a moral discussion, since they are descriptive of conduct and refer to the inner nature of humans rather than the outer.

Heidegger's analysis of the nature and condition of human existence, though explicitly non-religious both in its conception and its expression, can nevertheless find some applicability in the religious sphere, and a parallel in the fall of Adam and Eve. The fact of fallenness is considered by Muslims and Christians alike to have spiralled through the ages to affect all members of the human species.<sup>72</sup> There is an inescapable dimension of mystery in human existence, and religion like morality, having its roots in the very nature of man address this mysterious aspect.

As a way out of this situation of fallenness, religion points to the supernatural, while in a situation devoid of religion, there would still be the focus on the human being as his or her own rescuer. There is a conception of religion which has had a profound influence on modern ways of thinking about the place of religion in the life of humans. It inspired Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* and even goes back to Pascal's *Pensées*. According to this trend of thought, humans need religion to give

them a sense of place in the world. Religion gives each person a sense of his or her own identity as imperfect but perfectible. Without this sense, there would be no difference between them and other animals. Religion makes life worth living in spite of human fallenness. Because of religion the human being is no longer intolerable to him or herself and no longer seeks to escape from him or herself. He or she learns to cope.

Even from the purely secular point of view, religion serves a practical purpose by holding ecclesiastical communities together, and by giving a public and sacred character to certain actions and occasions such as marriage, birth and death. It serves to reinforce men's motives for observing social rules by the threat of punishments or the promise of rewards and the hands of some being or beings more powerful than humans.

#### **b. Religion as Satisfying Special Human Hungers**

Human beings have other hungers which the lower animals do not have, and if they are not taught how to satisfy these hungers too, they will remain individually distraint, socially dangerous and disruptive, no matter how well they have learnt to state or cope with their lesser appetites. Dietrich Bonhoeffer identifies three such hungers: the hunger for meaning, the hunger for love, and the hunger for craftsmanship. By feeding these hungers, humans can overcome the frustration attendant upon their state of fallenness.<sup>73</sup>

Bernard Iddings Bell links the extra hunger to the religious realm and claims that ignorance of religion lessens the human impulse toward endurance and daring as well as toward compassion and love<sup>74</sup>. It prevents a right evaluation of human motives and therefore hinders a sound understanding of the human condition and human behaviour. The search for compassion and encouragement is expressed in religious creeds, rituals and prayers. These are the ways in which the human race cries out for help.

There is no doubt that religious belief is the mainstay of most moral laws and even the entire legal system operative in the "Christian" Western world -- a heritage Nigeria also shares. The Decalogue in the Christian Bible as well as the moral teachings in the Koran are not just a set of religious rules meant for worshippers. They are designed as the path to the good life, which it is the goal of moral education to clarify. In the Decalogue, for example, apart from the first three commandments against idolatry and commanding the observance of holy days of worship<sup>75</sup>, all the rest are reflected in society's books of law binding everybody in society. It can thus be supposed that one who faithfully observes the prescriptions of the Decalogue and related laws, would be *ipso facto* keeping the moral law.

**c. Religion as Providing Common Values for the  
Legitimation of the Social Order**

The common conclusion from this fact is that religion provides the common values for the legitimation of the social order.<sup>76</sup> That means that the practice of religion sometimes directly aids moral consciousness. The antireligious policies of the Soviet Union are among the great bastions of communism. Now the leadership aware of the country's desperate situation and the need for moral regeneration, is looking for help in the form of the restoration of old religious norms, usually presented in the Soviet mass media as "all mankind values".<sup>77</sup> The media now preach compassion, grace, forgiveness, charity and other virtues previously presented as elements of bourgeois decadence.<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, priests, the targets of derogation for decades after the revolution, "emerged as among the most respected people in the country; and literature and the arts started to praise religion" and has begun to acknowledge religion as "a means of halting Soviet society's accelerating demoralization."<sup>79</sup>

Some Western theorists have been critical of religion. It would seem to most people, however, that the objections to religion are based on a misunderstanding of its true nature. What the critics usually emphasize is where religion has been abused, such as where people have been persecuted for not believing what they were expected to believe. When people in the name of religion take on to themselves the power to persecute others, that is an abuse of religion. Such abuses manifest themselves in religious fanaticism, bigotry and anti-religious chauvinism. It is worry about this kind of situation that led Hobbes to consider a diversity of religious beliefs a danger to domestic peace. Anyone wanting to appeal to religion as a base for moral education in a pluralist society such as Nigeria, need not be put off by, but must have to contend with, the views of critics of religion in general.

Religion is not merely believing, as Hegel and Tylor claimed; nor is it just a matter of emotions, as Schleiermacher claimed. Even though the element of belief and of emotion is present, uncritical belief or emotions unaccompanied and guided by intellect and reason, are likely to mislead. Religion must be felt as well as thought. It must be lived, and translated into action. It is not a segment of life. It is not just ritual or ceremony or doctrines or structures. These might be in the service of religion, but they are not religion itself. Finally, religion cannot be properly described in terms of an

ideology because unlike ideology, which operates on the level of the intellect and the emotions, religion penetrates man's innermost being.

A morality based on religion would base the moral law on the authority of God or some divine being. Such a morality would, for obvious reasons, be unacceptable to atheists, agnostics, and some humanists.<sup>80</sup> Radical humanists argue that since there is no God to rebel against, humans should realize for themselves that it is senseless to be rebellious. They should cultivate cheerfulness rather than cynicism.<sup>81</sup> Most atheists would be inclined to toe the line of radical humanism<sup>82</sup> and, grounding their world view on nature alone, would base all human values in this-earthly experiences. They would view the human being solely as a functioning unity of physical, emotional, and intellectual faculties. Moral education under this view would comprise, as Corliss Lamont claims, the education of the emotions, the senses and the aesthetic faculties.<sup>83</sup> The basis of this thesis is the presupposition that pleasure is the sole good for man and the sole end of human activities.<sup>84</sup> The laws that regulate activities have been made for utility, which in turn generates pleasure. Virtue is therefore "no other than the calculus of pleasure."<sup>85</sup> Humanism's appeal lies in its fascinating combination of utilitarianism with hedonism -- which are, no doubt, among the most appealing tendencies to the human fancy.

As can be read from the preamble to the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which declares Nigeria to be "One Nation Under God", atheistic and agnostic views and tendencies can only be associated with a minority of the population. By the same token, even though tolerance and understanding should not be denied them, it is unlikely that Nigeria's rule of life will be based on their preferences rather than on those of the generality of the Nigerian people.

Religion is generally accepted as a help both in establishing and ensuring a morally sound society, and in eliminating misdemeanours. Its great strength in moral matters is the provision of a model -- Jesus Christ for Christians, Mohammed for Muslims, and the Ancestors for the practitioners of traditional religion. It achieves this by offering an incentive for moral conduct -- often reward in an afterlife or union with God. Sometimes the very exercise of religion turns out to be a practice in moral training.

Each religion contains within itself its own moral codes. These codes are not necessarily opposed to each other, but frequently there are subtle differences between them. These subtle differences must be respected, and there should be no attempt to down-play or ignore them. It is a mistake to think that one could wish away the

differences and create a single moral system based on all the religions and valid for all Nigerians. As Theophilus Okere points out, such a common-denominator religion would carry no more weight than a code of etiquette, because it would not be supported by the deep convictions one could live for and die for.<sup>86</sup>

Religion has to do with the good life. Its concern is that men and women should behave according to God's desire, and thereby behave as human beings. Religion is not merely a moral science. It has to do with knowing what the good life is and living it. Even learned scholars know that if left unaided, courage fails as they contemplate the vastness of truth and the difficulty of learning and of living, and their morality.

Religious education will enable pupils to come to terms with, or understand those experiences of humankind that culminate in religious belief and practice. It will sensitize them to religious views whether they are themselves religiously committed or not. When sensitivity and sympathy to others' views, values and feelings develop, mutual concord and harmony follow.

Admittedly, there are the seemingly unresolvable discrepancies in inter- and intra-religious interpretations. Some people in desperation have dared to call for a secularization of religion. Some even called for its total abrogation. Just as the secular state is supposed by some to provide a panacea to religious bigotry, so also is secularism believed by its advocates to provide a compromise situation amidst the never-ending controversies over religious interpretations. Dr Tai Solarin of Nigeria would bulldoze all churches (and mosques?), Ogali A. Ogali would turn them into warehouses after the manner of the communists in Russia and other socialist states. It remains to be shown however, why religion *per se* can be blamed for Nigeria's problems, and how a religionless situation or an iconoclastic attitude to religion could work the magic. The suppression of religion in the Socialist States, rather than bring heaven to earth only gave birth to cynicism which has had the unforeseen effect of poisoning other aspects of social harmony.

Diversity of doctrines is not exclusive to religion, and should not be invoked as a pretext for implementing a policy prejudicial to the inclusion of religious education in the school curriculum. It is found in practically all fields of education. In modern human sciences, for example, as much as in ethical theorizing, there is the endless dispute as to when exactly life begins, and at what stage of pregnancy the foetus can be considered a human person with rights. In philosophy, there is disagreement between idealism and empiricism, materialism and rationalism; and in political theory there is

disagreement among Marxism, Capitalism and the various theories as to the true meaning of democracy. These disagreements should not lead to the discontinuance of any of the fields in schools, nor should it lead to the adulteration of any, so that it could become acceptable to everyone. Those who fear that religious education will heighten religious tensions are therefore mistaken. Religious education will bring about a meeting of minds so that those seemingly daunting obstacles can be closely examined and their sting removed.

What is feared and censured by critics is religion as abused. Pure religion is free from the negative idiosyncratic elements that built up in the course of religion's march through history -- the persecutions, wars, crusades, fanaticism, bigotry, chauvinism, authoritarianism. Pure and unspoiled religion as Saint James describes it consists in coming to the aid of the hungry, helping the underprivileged, and above all, keeping oneself uncorrupted by the world.<sup>87</sup> It is inconceivable that anyone who understood religion in its pure sense would still call for its abrogation.

#### **4. Recent Western Developmental Theories**

Any discussion of moral education needs to take account of psychological theories of moral development, already referred to in Chapter Two. These include those of Erik Erikson, who is best remembered for his so-called Eight Ages of Man (see below); Jean Piaget, who speaks of three (or rather four) levels of development -- the sensori-motor, the pre-operational, the concrete operational, and the formal operational. Then there is Kohlberg with his three levels of development -- the preconventional, the conventional, and the postconventional levels.

##### **a. Psycho-Social Approach: Erikson**

The Eriksonian pattern tries to take account of both psychological and social data in the human make-up. The study of development is not only a matter of general interaction with environment but of specific kinds of interaction. Other people are not just pieces of one's environment; social environment is fundamentally different from physical environment. The individual "plays a role in society" which in turn helps to determine what and who the individual is. An element of unpredictability has to be admitted, and the rules and canons of experimental-mathematical science are not going to be observed.

Erikson comes out of the Freudian tradition, but he has also tried to do a major overhaul of psychoanalysis by trying to incorporate the psychoanalytic categories into a socially oriented theory. He begins his charting of human development with these two assumptions: (1) Human beings develop according to steps predetermined by the growing person's readiness, and (2) society is constituted to meet and to invite the succession of potentialities for interaction. Such a correlation between the organismic and the social does not determine whether there might be other powers of the individual have not been or cannot be socialized.

Erikson goes beyond the individual and focuses on the generation.<sup>88</sup> He interprets the individual's life from within the movement of the generations. The child who is on one side of the generational divide will eventually come around to the other side. He maintained that the pattern of one generation "concluding itself in the next" is evident in the flow of the centuries.<sup>89</sup>

Erikson formulated his well-known "eight ages of man" in his essay in *Childhood and Society*,<sup>90</sup> setting down the chart of ages as follows:

1. basic trust vs. basic mistrust
2. autonomy vs. shame
3. initiative vs. guilt
4. industry vs. inferiority
5. identity vs. role confusion
6. intimacy vs. isolation
7. generativity vs. stagnation
8. integrity vs. despair

Erikson has frequently pointed out that he does not have an achievement scale. He does not propose a description of qualities that should be preached to people who would strive to attain them. Two things seem to be implied here: (1) The first term in each pair is clearly the desirable one; however, it appears in personal life more by discovery or gift than by conscious acquisition; (2) The terms in the second column, instead of being bad qualities, are more like the minor characters in a play; they are bad only when they try to upstage the major characters. A conscious attempt to eliminate these qualities is unwise.



Erikson seems to relegate religion to a smaller, helping role in each of his developmental stages. He places religion as an institution in the very first age along with the struggle of basic trust versus basic mistrust. At first glance that seems to imply that infants are religious and everyone else is not. However, if one recalls that he is describing the relation between generations, then religion is at least as important for adult ages as it is for the children. Erikson is no doubt aware that his final age of integrity has moral and religious connotations. Etymologically, the word integrity is related to peace, health, wholeness, and holiness. If we are to realize such integration or integrity, we need a "post-narcissistic love of the human ego..., an experience which conveys some world order and spiritual sense."<sup>91</sup>

The age that does not seem to fit the religious sentiment is generativity. That word seems to suggest activity directed outward without inwardness, mutuality, or a sense of limits. The choice of terms here is crucial because Erikson said that if he had not been writing from the standpoint of the child, generativity would be the centre of his system.<sup>92</sup>

#### **b. Moral Reasoning: Piaget and Kohlberg**

Jean Piaget's work provides experimental data to validate Kant's principle. Piaget sought to trace in painstaking detail how forms of knowledge are constructed by the mind and when they appear in an individual's life. Lacking any clear method to accomplish this project, Piaget had to invent his own, and, as Gabriel Moran puts it, "often relying on instinct and intuition, and often concentrating on his own children".<sup>93</sup> He left himself open to criticism about method, and many scientists attack him on those grounds.

Like Erikson, though not so frequently, Piaget uses the word epigenetic and sees later development in evolutionary terms as already initially present in more primitive forms. For example, the adolescent's fully developed notion of causality is already discernible in the infant's magical views of reality.

Piaget's interest was the steps by which a child comes to make abstract judgments. These judgments can be studied as structures of logical reasoning. An aspect of this reasoning power is what Piaget calls moral judgments, those judgments pertaining to the ordering of society. For Piaget, moral is almost another name for social/affective. That is, the social context of cognition has laws to protect the individual. As the child

develops it comes to see the necessity and value of these rules governing social harmony.

The whole scheme of Piaget's moral development is a movement from thinking that rules are external to an understanding that they are intrinsic to our own good. Piaget refers to "two moralities" rather than to two stages of morality. The first morality he calls heteronomous, meaning that rules are external, sacred, and unchangeable. A second morality, called autonomous, grows up parallel to the first, conflicts with it, and finally replaces it. The second morality is one of co-operation, intention, and solidarity. The child eventually comes to see that laws are a matter of mutual consent and so at times they can and should be changed for the good running of society.

A chief concern of Kohlberg's has always been education. He saw moral education as caught between indoctrination, which gives over morality to the objective realm of rules, and values clarification, which does not escape subjectivism. He therefore set out to build a kind of bridge between the implications of the two concepts.

The concept of indoctrination in its strictest sense assumes that individuals must be told what the truth is and have limits imposed on their questioning. In the 1960s and 1970s, values clarification came into prominence as a reaction to indoctrination. Since it assumed there was no objective morality, values clarification consisted almost entirely of techniques for stimulating awareness. As a "school of thought" it was "so lacking in substance it could hardly avoid being more than a passing vogue"<sup>44</sup> for, stretched to its logical consequences values clarification can be a form of hedonism where a subjective awareness -- usually of pleasure or pain -- is the end point, and where there is no additional mechanism for determining the value or goal of such an awareness. However, other forms of moral subjectivism had preceded values clarification and no doubt will recur after the interest in techniques for clarifying values has passed.

Piaget's definition of morality bridges the positions between indoctrination and values clarification. In accordance with Piaget's theory, an adequate moral education would have to transcend the dichotomy of subjective and objective moralities, and reconceptualize the problem instead as one of interaction. Then a process of personal clarification might be useful as part of the human quest for an adequate morality.

Kohlberg offers as his own system a kind of corollary to Piaget's position: a stimulation of the "natural" development of the child's own moral judgment. Such a development of the reasoning power could hardly escape subjectivism, some critics of

Kohlberg have pointed that out. In popular summaries Kohlberg is often grouped with values clarification, but he rejects this classification.

### **c. How Adaptable to Nigeria's Situation?**

What are most readily applicable in Nigeria are the various theories of development as conceived by Erikson, Kohlberg and Piaget. Each of the theorists recognizes various stages of development, which means that moral education at any stage must be applicable to the level of development attained by the child. Their three tendencies correspond to the various levels which must be attained for moral education in Nigeria to go beyond the common-sense level to which it seems tied.

At a very young age, the child cannot cope with complex theories as much as he or she can cope with simple illustrations and demonstrations. The very young child therefore remains at the common-sense level of explanation. As his or her understanding develops, the child will no longer be satisfied with commonsense explanations, but must apply reason in order to question any explanation further. As his or her competence with critical reasoning develops, he or she has the possibility of discerning between sound and unsound reasoning, good and bad explanations in order to be able to drop the bad and unsound in favour of the good and sound. These three stages roughly fit respectively into the schemes proposed by Erikson, Piaget, and Kohlberg.

Erikson's psycho-social approach which is the fruit of his Freudian sympathies, has wide-ranging applications for political, moral and religious education in Nigeria. By taking into account the social and psychological, the predictable and unpredictable aspects of human development, and by correlating the individual with the social environment, Erikson's theory works on the presupposition that there is always something of value that endures through generations and is passed on for the enrichment of succeeding generations. It can therefore easily relate with the transmissory approach which the method most favoured in traditional moral education. Its purpose would be to 'introduce' the children into what makes for the good life -- a further vindication of R.S. Peters' consideration of education as initiation.

Piaget's interest in the understanding takes the process a step further where moral reasoning takes the place of common-sense explanations that characterize moral explanations in traditional moral education. At the 'initiation' level, children operate at the command level in which it is sufficient to do things because that is 'the way it is normally done' by decent people, and to fail to comply means to be naughty. The

second level introduced by Piaget's theory would be interested in determining just what makes it decent to act one way rather than in an opposite way. It is the level of seeking and giving reasons for action.

Beyond the seeking and giving of reasons for action there is yet the higher level of distinguishing between good reasons and bad; between indoctrination and values clarification. Kohlberg's interest in education makes his theory operative at this level where the child having passed the earlier levels must adopt a certain mode of behaviour which can be said to be virtuous or good based not on the child's preferences or feelings but on the objective demands of the moral law.

The details of how the developmental theories mentioned could be applied in Nigeria are covered in section 2f of Chapter Six which deals with beginning the child's moral education early enough in life.

## Notes

1. Carpenter, F.C., "Religious Education vs. Moral Education", Moral Education Vol 2, No 1, March 1970, p.29.
2. Stremlau, John J., The International Politics of the Nigerian Civil War, 1967-1970, Princeton New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1971, p.8.
3. 1 Sam 17; 21:9; 22:10.
4. Aristotle believed that it is possible to have one, a few, or many, rule for common interest in each of the three forms of government. But he did rank democracy among the bad forms of government, next only to tyranny and oligarchy. See his Politics Chapters 3:7-8.
5. ibid 1266a3-17b10.
6. Halle, Louis J., The Ideological Imagination, New York: Quadrangle Books, 1985, p.17.
7. Hobbes, Thomas, Leviathan, Part I Chapter 14, Middlesex, England: Penguin Classics, 1985, pp.189ff.
8. Orwell, George, 1984, Signet Classic, New York and Scarborough, Ontario: New American Library, 1984, p.5.
9. Hobbes, Thomas, op. cit. p.218.
10. Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, Of the Social Contract, Book I Chapter VI, London: Oxford University Press, 1985, p.180.
11. The idea of freedom is contradictory to the idea of force. Hobbes' defines freedom or liberty as "the absence of externall impediments: which impediments, may take away part of a mans power to what hee would..." (*Leviathan* p.189).
12. ibid Book II Chapter III.
13. The concept of "General Will" as used by Rousseau goes against the concept of self-determination which democracy builds on. The coup de grace is delivered by the denaturalization of humans in the process of achieving the general will. If anything, this theory can could hardly make it in the most basic Nigerian society where the people are republican in their decision-making process.

14. Marx's theory for example, is based on a criticism of capitalism where a few propertied people hold the masses in their employ and make profits on them. Such a scenario has no equivalent in traditional Nigerian society, for everyone was heir to his parent's lands and property and could only sell them in times of grave need. Landed property is rarely sold in perpetuity. Rather the "buyer" would hold it in trust for a token sum over an agreed period of years after which the owner would reclaim it. Where it is sold in perpetuity, eg. to someone who wants to build a home, the latter would either exchange an equivalent piece of land elsewhere or provide the amount needed to purchase an equivalent in case the former would someday decide to build. The point being made here is that neither the communist theory nor the capitalist practice that provoked it, can be exactly applicable in Nigeria. The population is largely agrarian and each person is self-employed. One cannot talk of a class structure in a society that is egalitarian. By a similar process of elimination most other Euro-based theories can be shown to be unsuited to Nigeria.
15. Rousseau, J.-J., "The Social Contract" in Social Contract: Locke, Hume, Rousseau, Edited with an introduction by Sir Ernest Barker, London: Oxford University Press, 1985, p.179.
16. The desire to keep one's job is very important indeed in any type of political or professional arrangement. There is a difference though between keeping one's job within the party and earning one's place in a non-party arrangement. The former involves conformity with party policies whether one agrees with it or not; the latter involves a full, judicious use of one's faculties and abilities untrammelled by any partisan bottlenecks.
17. For a detailed discussion of the plight of the minority in a majority-based government, see J.S. Mill's Utilitarianism, Liberty, Representative Government, Edited by H.B. Acton, London, Melbourne and Toronto: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1977, pp.256-275.
18. What comes immediately to mind is the sad drama of mowing down demonstrators Tiananmen Square in Peking. The Chinese government claims that the demonstrations have been at the instigation of the US Central Intelligence Agency. From the twenty-four hour radio/TV live coverage of the events here in the United States, with the opening of telephone hot-lines with call-collect services, one tends to agree. Governments are not known for letting other countries dictate to them how to run their own affairs. Hence the stiff resistance to the promptings of the media and the decisive crackdown. Furthermore, no government, unless overwhelmed by the forces of opposition, will throw in the towel simply because students angrily demonstrate.

19. The breath-taking developments in Eastern Europe show that when the people decide to call the shots, there is no stopping them. The violent suppression of the uprising in Peking could only postpone, but could never take away the evil day for autocracy.
20. No formal votes were taken but open discussions and debates were held and there was no mistaking what the Nigerians wanted as they had the opportunity to air their views through the media and *viva voce*.
21. The Babangida administration worked out a step by step programme of transition. It began with a bold economic reform -- the so-called Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) -- that would ensure a stable economic base for the new political order to catch on unimpeded.
22. In a bold but surprising move President Babangida and his Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) in September 1989 rejected all 80 political parties presented for screening and unilaterally proposed two parties -- the Social Democratic Party, and the National Republican Convention -- "one a little to the left, the other a little to the right." The reason given was that the "old politicians" had infiltrated all the parties and were still pulling the strings. Some people go with the government's line of reasoning, but others express scepticism.
23. Lepp, Ignace, The Authentic Morality, Translated by Bernard Murchland, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965, p.151.
24. *ibid.* p.155
25. Quoting a recent article "The World in the 1990s" published in the London-based The Economist, Joe Slovo gives an impressive statistic of the progress made in the Soviet Union since the Bolshevik Revolution:  
 "There are more graduate engineers than in the US, more graduate research scientists than in Japan and more medical doctors per head than in Western Europe. It has also produced more steel, fuel and energy than any other country... How many capitalist countries can match the achievements of most of the socialist world in the provision of social security, child care, the ending of cultural backwardness, and so on? There is certainly no country in the world which can beat Cuba's record in the sphere of health care." See, Slovo, Joe, Has Socialism Failed?, A South African Communist Party Pamphlet, Published by Inkululeko Publications, P.O. Box 902 London N19 3YY, 1990, p.1.
26. Haydon, Graham, "Collective Moral Philosophy and Education for

- Pluralism" Journal of Philosophy of Education, Vol. 20, No. 1, 1986, p.97.
27. ibid pp.98-100.
  28. Aristotle Ethics, 1129b15.
  29. Kant, Immanuel, Groundwork for Metaphysics of Morals, Translated by H.J. Paton, New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987, p.42.
  30. Hobbes, Thomas, Leviathan, Edited by C.B. Macpherson, Middlesex: Pelican Classics, 1988, pp.202-207.
  31. Descartes, René, Philosophical Writings of Descartes, Translated by John Cottingham et al., Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987, p.118.
  32. ibid pp.122-124.
  33. Leiser, Burton, Custom, Law, and Morality, New York: Anchor Books, 1989, p.89.
  34. St John 13:34-35.
  35. Saint Paul I Corinthians 13:13 "There are three things that last: faith, hope, and love, and the greatest of them is love."
  36. Cook, Vincent M., "Human Autonomy and Political Authority", Freedom and Value, p.112.
  37. ibid. p.114.
  38. Peters, R.S., Reason and Compassion, London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973, pp.44-48.
  39. Porter, Burton F., The Good Life: Alternatives in Ethics, New York: Macmillan Publishing Company Inc., 1980, p.203.
  40. Fletcher, Joseph, Situation Ethics, (The New Morality) Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986, p.39.
  41. Bernard Williams did an insightful analysis of this problem in his book, Moral Luck (Philosophical Papers 1973-1980), Cambridge, London, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981, pp.71-82.
  42. Quoted in the National Catholic Reporter newspaper, Washington, October 20 1989.



43. Childs, John L., Education and Morals, New York: Science Editions, John Wiley and Sons Inc., 1967, p.16.
44. *ibid* p.167.
45. Locke, J., An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Edited with an introduction by A.D. Woozely, A Meridian Book, New York: New American Library, 1974, p.223.
46. Even then for Socrates knowledge is not taught but consists in recollection of experiences had in previous existence (cf. Meno Section 85). This was not the last word though. Since there were neither teachers nor students of virtue, was it then true opinion? That too was elusive. He finally settled with an eschatological view. Virtue comes by the gift of God.
47. Melling, David, Understanding Plato, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1987, p.27.
48. Also known as the Curé of Ars, John Vianney was a Catholic priest born at Lyons in 1786. He was nearly dismissed for deficient learning abilities. But when he was finally ordained he was able by his forthright preaching, personal mortification, prayer and charity, to animate and inspire his parishioners in a wonderful way. He is regarded as a patron of pastors.
49. Aristotle Ethics, 1093a11-1097a14
50. *ibid* 1109a25
51. *ibid* 1112a15.
52. MacIntyre, Alasdair, After Virtue, London: Gerald Duckworth & Company Ltd, 1985, p.53; Kruschwitz & Roberts, The Virtues, Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1987, pp.5-7. The abortion debate is a case in point. People forcefully and emotionally marshal out their points for or against without the slightest intention of being swayed from their initial stance no matter how intellectually "convincing" the opposing arguments are. There is thus a lot more to moral issues than intellectual argumentation.
53. Kruschwitz Robert B., & Roberts, Robert C., The Virtues (Contemporary Essays on Moral Character), Belmont California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1987, pp.36-45.
54. *ibid* p.3.

55. See Cua A.S., Dimensions of Moral Creativity: Paradigms, Principles and Ideals, University Park: Pennsylvania University Press, 1978, Chapter 6.
56. Locke, John, Essays on the Law of Nature, Edited by W. von Leyden, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954, p.28.
57. Williams, Bernard, Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy, Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1985, pp.10-11
58. Jaspers, Karl, The Great Philosophers, New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1962, pp.97-106. See also Cua, Antonio S., "Morality and Paradigmatic Individuals, in American Philosophical Quarterly, vol 6 no.4, October 1969.
59. Jesus did this in his Sermon on the Mount (St Matthew: Chapters 5-7). He went through the prescription of the Old Testament and modified them. Without trepidation he declared: *"It was said to those of old... But I say to you..." And one by one he proceeded to give his own version of the teaching.*
60. Wolf, Susan, "Moral Saints", Journal of Philosophy 79, 8(August 1982), pp.419-439. See also Kruschwitz & Roberts, pp.137-152.
61. J-J. Rousseau, The First and Second Discourses, Translated by Roger D. and Judith R. Masters, Edited with an Introduction and Notes by Roger D. Masters, New York: St Martin's Press, 1964, p.175.
62. Kruschwitz R.B., & Roberts, R.C., op. cit. p.137.
63. See Smith, T.V., Philosophers Speak For Themselves, Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1934, p.72.
64. ibid. p.72.
65. Cua, A.S., "The Status of Principles in Confucian Ethics" in Journal of Chinese Philosophy, (forthcoming) 1989-1990.
66. Machiavelli, Niccollo, The Prince, Tr. with an introduction by George Bull, Penguin Classics, Basingstoke, Suffolk: Richard Clay Ltd, 1983 pp.92-94.
67. Kant, Immanuel, Critique of Practical Reason, Translated by Lewis White, London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1988, p.5.

68. Heidegger, Martin, Being and Time, Translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1986, pp.219-224. The exact concept Heidegger used was *Verfallen* which stood for the activity of falling as well as the condition of having fallen down. It was meant to convey the idea of "deteriorating", "falling down", "collapsing". See footnote 2 on p.42 of his *Being and Time*.
  69. Peters, R.S., Ethics and Education, Beck, New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1988, p.232.
  70. On page 138 Heidegger specifically excluded the moral sense: "We would also misunderstand the ontologico-existential structure of falling if we were to ascribe to it the sense of a bad and deplorable ontical property which, perhaps, more advanced stages of human culture might be able to rid themselves."
  71. Heidegger, op. cit. p.223.
  72. Traditional religion has very little interest in eschatology and it explains the situation of fallenness in terms of *akara-aka* (destiny). In other words fallenness according to traditional belief is part and parcel of the human condition. Its explanation is therefore fatalistic. Hence the proverb: "*Azu di na mmiri a naghị ago ago mmiri.*" (A fish lives in water and could never deny being wet.)
3. Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, Letters and Papers from Prison, London: Fontana Publishers, 1987, p.93. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, worried about the religiosity that was rapidly passing for religion, called for a religionless Christianity. He wanted maturity in religion rather than mere shallow formalism. Before Bonhoeffer, Auguste Comte had already begun to dismantle the aura of supernaturalism. He proposed a secular Trinity of Humanity, Earth and Space, and a complete secular calendar of saints based on secular achievement - Socrates, Plato and Aristotle included. Neither Bonhoeffer nor Comte was against religion as such; rather they criticised a prevalent misapplication of religion.
  4. Iddings Bell, Bernard, Crisis In Education, New York, London, Toronto: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1969, p.135.
  5. See the Book of Exodus 20:3-11.
  6. Neuhaus, Richard, "Two Civil Religions", Religion and Society Report, February 1989, vol 6 no 2. Critics of religion, notably Feuerbach and Marx think that this legitimization is often to deceive the unwary and the simple. Those in support, the church and other religions, hold that it was God who established the social order, and to maintain peace is

always in accord to the will of God. In I Peter 2:13 we read: "*Because of the Lord, be obedient to every human institution, whether to the emperor as sovereign or to the governors he commissions.... Such obedience is the will of God.*" Care must be taken in using this passage, since even tyrants could use it to almost as a blackmail against a conscientious objector to certain government policies on moral or any other grounds.

77. Shlapentokh, Vladimir, "Gorbachev Gets Religion", The Washington Post, Sunday, March 4, 1990, p.C2.
  78. *ibid.*
  79. *ibid.*
  80. Not all humanists are atheistic or opposed to religion. There are Christian humanists, for example. In general, for all its antipathy toward asceticism and theology, humanism did not have an antireligious or anti-Christian character. Its interest in defending the value and freedom of man drew it into discussing the traditional problems of God, of providence, of the soul, its immortality and its freedom. Humanist discussion of religion had two principal themes: the civil function of religion and religious tolerance. cf. Nicola Abbagnano, "Humanism", The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy Vol 3&4, New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. & The Free Press, 1972, p.71.
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1. Robinson, Richard, The Atheist's Values, New York: Oxford University Press, 1981, pp.155-157.
  2. The fact that atheists are at base humanist does not imply that all humanists are thereby necessarily atheists. We sometimes hear people as Christian humanists, an indication that they do not consider their humanistic beliefs as necessarily opposed to a deity.
  3. Lamont, Corliss, "Naturalist Humanism," The Humanist, September-October, 1971, pp.9-10.
  4. *ibid.*
  5. *ibid.*
  6. Okere, Theophilus, "The Role of Religion in Moral Education", New Perspectives in Moral Education, Ed. by O.A. Nduka & E.O. Iheoma, Lagos: Evans Publishers, 1983, pp.52-61.

89. Saint James 1:26,27. The word thus translated in the New Testament is *threskeia*, and it means outward religious service. It is the motivating influence of religion for community and social concern that I am underscoring here. I am aware of religion's philosophical and other meanings, eg, Schleiermacher's view of religion as the feeling of absolute dependence; Kant's viewing it in terms of the observance of the moral law; and Fichte who sees it in terms of faith in the moral order of the universe.
88. Erikson, Erik, Insight and Responsibility, New York: Norton, 1964, p.229.
89. *ibid.* p.132.
90. Erikson, Erik, Childhood and Society, Second Edition, New York: Norton, 1963, pp.247-274.
91. *ibid.* p.268.
92. *ibid* p.266.
93. Moran, Gabriel, Religious Education Development: Images for the Future, Minneapolis, Minnesota: Winston Press Inc. p.48.
94. *ibid.* p.70.

## CHAPTER SIX

### TOWARDS A DISTINCTIVELY NIGERIAN APPROACH

*Reason and experiment have been indulged, and error has fled before them.*  
– THOMAS JEFFERSON, *Notes on the State of Virginia*.

*The wide diffusion of culture, and the education of humanity for justice and liberty and peace are indispensable to the dignity of man and constitute a sacred duty which all nations must fulfil in a spirit of mutual assistance and concern.*  
– Preamble of the Constitution of UNESCO.

Extensive discussion has been devoted in Chapter Three to the traditional Nigerian approach to moral education. The traditional approach is distinctively Nigerian in that it is carried out by Nigerians, for Nigerians, and based on principles and presuppositions that are uniquely Nigerian. An important difference though is that it is closer to the past albeit recent. In the light of contemporary circumstances many aspects of the traditional approach will be seen to be rather anachronistic. The jungle experiences of the lads for example, could hardly be re-enacted except as a quaint showpiece, since the circumstance within which that form of education thrived has largely become history. Most forests have disappeared and formal schooling has replaced the informal.

Any new approach that is distinctively Nigerian, besides being carried out by Nigerians, for Nigerians, and with specifically Nigerian issues at the background, must also be able to be applied in present-day formal classroom situations. There is still room for reference to the traditional forms of government; the traditional moral code; adapted forms of initiation; discussions about traditional and other forms of religious activities; the use of stories, proverbs and brain teasers so effective in traditional educational methods.

A distinctively Nigerian approach should be able to provide for at least three major areas of interest, namely, 1) the possibility of political education towards a non-Western form of democracy; 2) the possibility of moral education building on the strengths of traditional cultures; and 3) the possibility of religious education which builds on common factors while also promoting understanding of differences.

## **1. The Possibility of Political Education Towards a non-Western Form of Democracy**

For effective political education to be achieved in Nigeria, primary consideration must be given to the country's unique needs in her own unique circumstances. There are two aspects in the process of education -- the speculative and the practical. The speculative aspect of political education is concerned with theories and principles, while the practical is the application of these theories in concrete life situations. The heart of the speculative aspect is the ideology behind the political system. It is the ideology that provides the basis as well as the justification for the political stance of the community. Used in this broad sense, ideology can be said to include organized religion in its aspect of providing motives and giving answers to problems.

The speculative aspect can be found in theories propounded in documents, manuals, treatises, textbooks and manifestos, and is meant to engage the mental and intellectual capacities of humans. The practical aspect is these theories as applied in the national life of the country and according to the country's own unique circumstances.

For a distinctively Nigerian approach, it is necessary, among others to a) be primarily based on distinctively Nigerian or related sources; b) consider the Athenian model of democracy which is so similar to the traditional and contemporary Nigerian socio-political experience; c) consider the contributions of such luminaries as Julius Nyerere in his interpretation of democratic principles according to Tanzania's contemporary experience and ideals, since there are a great many parallels between Tanzania and Nigeria; d) analyze and seek to understand and apply the principles of democracy to Nigeria's present needs and circumstances; e) eschewing negative approaches -- brainwashing, propagandizing, sloganeering -- which are likely to distort issues, and getting into the business of rigorous analysis which confronts all the important issues that might arise in trying to understand and apply the democratic process.

### **a. Using Distinctively Nigerian or Related Sources**

The primary resource material for political education is without doubt the country's constitutions and allied documents. With those forming the background, the history of political thought as well as a study of the major political theories and systems of contemporary times will provide an in-depth understanding required for operating and living a political system well suited to the country. The relevance of any political theory

to the country can be measured from understanding the historical circumstance behind its formulation, the issues it set out to address and how successfully it managed to address the issues. The next question is how, if at all, and given Nigeria's unique historical and social circumstances, any or several theories can be applicable in its case.<sup>1</sup>

The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria defines, as no other document does, what the national goals are; its expectations for citizens, the place and role of the individual in the community, the way to relate, the economy, the freedoms, the laws, etc. The Constitution set out for the Nigerians at least two major ideals of:

1. Living "in unity and harmony as one, indivisible and indissoluble sovereign nation *under God*".
2. "Promoting the good government and welfare of all persons in Nigeria on the principles of freedom, equality and justice, and for the purpose of consolidating the unity of our people."

Specifically articulated in the Constitution is the national ethic as comprising "Discipline, Self-reliance, and Patriotism."<sup>2</sup> From the Constitution also the phrase "one nation under God" is worthy of note. It implies that theism or religion does have an important place, and precludes atheism as a principle in the national life. Thus Nigeria as a nation is theistically oriented.

Nigeria also upholds the principle of freedom, equality and justice. Thus in practice, those whose convictions do not lead them to theism are still protected under the principle of justice and freedom. In brief the Constitution demands of the good citizen the disposition to live in unity and harmony, and promote good government on the principles of freedom, equality and justice.

There are also other ideals for citizenship education. These include the inculcation and nurturing of a patriotic spirit, learning and practising the spirit of democracy, vindicating the universal franchise which democracy guarantees to citizens, and making the government work according to the will of the people rather than impose its will on them.

Talking of democracy and education, some questions come to mind. Does democracy mean that the everyone should have a say as to the content, method, setting and style involved in the educational system? In other words should the educational policy be based on a plebiscite, on the decision of the government, on the wishes of parents, on



the preferences of students, or should it be left to experts in the field? These represent the various tendencies that come into play in determining the educational policy and each has arguments in its favour. The democratic aspect is certainly not breached if the experts in the field of education, in full cognizance of the concerns and wishes and overall goal of education for the given community, work out the programme and its content.

To guide them in this task they need the guiding light of certain principles which are plausible in themselves and suitable for the task they are meant to accomplish. In this regard, Amy Gutmann, in her book *Democratic Education*, argues that our allegiance to democracy commits us to accepting at least three fundamental educational principles of preparation for democracy, non-discrimination, and non-repression:

1. **For Democracy:** That education must provide the ability to participate actively in the democratic process.<sup>3</sup>
2. **For Non-Discrimination:** That no educable child may be excluded from an education adequate to participating in the political processes that structure choice among good lives.<sup>4</sup>
3. **For Non-Repression:** That neither the state nor any group in it may use education to restrict rational deliberation of competing conceptions of the good life and good society.<sup>5</sup>

Also worthy of note is the concept of "one nation". This concept has the capacity to evoke in the citizen the nationalist as well as the patriotic spirit. The spirit of nationalism is often viewed with suspicion particularly for its association with fanaticism, militarism and disruptive revolution. However, no nation could do without at least some measure of nationalism.<sup>6</sup>

There is actually only a thin line between nationalism and patriotism. The distinction between them lies in the distinction between the concept of nation -- place of one's birth; and country -- a political entity to which one belongs as of right and where one is entitled to exercise franchise. Clearly then, while the concept of patriotism has cosmopolitan implications, the concept of nationalism is more parochial. Since the French Revolution there has been a close synonymy between country and nation and, consequently between patriotism and nationalism.

As Ignace Lepp points out,<sup>7</sup> nationalism was from the beginning a return to closed society. Patriotism is by far superior to nationalism for in it one's country is cherished for what it actually is, while in nationalism it is prized for what it is imagined to be. Nationalist patriotism is directly opposed to other nationalisms. While pursuing its goal of preaching the love of country, it indirectly preaches at the same time hatred of other countries. The elevation by Dr Joseph Goebbels' of the Nazi fame, of lies and calumny to the rank of patriotic distinction is a case in point.

Traditionally nationalist patriotism has been associated with the conservative right political wing, while the left wing is associated with internationalism; indeed radical cosmopolitanism, and would sometimes regard themselves as citizens of the world. The former would stress elements of national pride, territorialism,<sup>8</sup> strong defence, national identity or sovereignty, while the latter would stress the world community, disarmament, international dialogue, and international cooperation. Fired by a patriotic spirit, Nigeria must decide what form of government it must have: a centralized, unitary government; a federal model with a strong central government; a loose federal model (confederation) with a weak central government; a completely new arrangement unique to Nigeria.

The first option, a unitary government leaves the central government with all the powers while the states have no powers at all. A unitary government would be unworkable in Nigeria now, since it will be construed as a renunciation of autonomy, so to speak, by people of the component section, who have known nothing else since Nigeria was established. Furthermore, Nigeria is so large geographically that it will be too unwieldy for one central government to run effectively, since the cultural, ethnic political and religious peculiarities of the various sections would call for special consideration each on its own merit.

In the second option, the central government is strong and the states are fairly strong also. That has been in operation in Nigeria all along. The strength of the central government is in its monopoly of the armed forces, the police force, and the foreign affairs. In that way it is able to place the states under control. This option gives ample room for self expression of the various component sections, and at the same time leaves ample room for unitary action on the national level. The states are sufficiently strong but not so strong as to overwhelm the central government. Thus it seems the Federal system remains Nigeria's most viable option.

The third model, a confederation, would deprive the central government of complete control and the possibilities are limitless as to what each state would decide to do with its autonomy. Theoretically a confederal system will grant each of the various peoples ample opportunity to be themselves and give their peculiarities full expression. The drawback of this possibility is that a national identity diminishes in inverse proportion to the increase in sectional or ethnic identity. Mobilization for national causes would be difficult to achieve, since there could hardly be any cause where every state would agree without any of them foot-dragging or trying to back out.

Another important point is the implication for Nigeria's unity of either aligning with the capitalist West or Socialist East,<sup>9</sup> or whether it were best to be politically non-aligned. It seems that Nigeria's position of greatest strength will be to remain politically non-aligned<sup>10</sup>. That will enable it to enjoy the best that each political bloc has to offer without placing itself under the perpetual spell of any. It can enjoy full autonomy and always talk from a position of strength in world affairs. It can relate with a member of either bloc on a strictly business level as an equal partner, or it can feel free to go completely on its own without requiring any other country's endorsement.

It seems more realistic in the light of what has been said, to go instead for a non-party government.<sup>11</sup> The advantage is that a non-party arrangement is spared all the defects of a multi-party system which has been pointed out in the last chapter includes: pressure on individuals to toe party lines rather than follow own conviction; party loyalty overriding national interests; reductionism arising from considering the country as a party and the majority as though it were the whole. The non-party arrangement will enable Nigerians to pick across the board the very best talents that could fill the positions of leadership, put them to work together according to a well-defined *modus operandi* based on the constitution, and dispense, at least for a while, with the expensive, rancorous, time-consuming, often confrontational partisan rhetoric. The blueprint for this kind of proposal is the family which is the foundation of all society. In the family the members often have to discuss frankly in order to reach the best decision in the interest of the entire family.

The military government in Nigeria, apart from the fact that no mechanism has been provided for monitoring its leadership, seems to be operating according to what might be considered a zero-party blueprint that is politically centrist. It can provide an interesting model with features that could be gainfully adopted in a civilian context:

- a: It is essentially task-oriented.
- b: There is no opposition on the basis of losers.
- c: Appointment to public office is not the triumph of winners over losers but a recognition of personal competence.
- d: Every office holder therefore stands or falls not on party loyalty or patronage, but by the effectiveness or otherwise which he or she handles the responsibilities entrusted to him or her in the service of the country.

If this kind of model can be constitutionally established and refined and put into operation in a civilian context, it would be possible to hold political debates on national issues on the basis of what one frankly views as best for the country without having the party's interested policies in one's way. Everyone will be entitled to raise an objection, or contribute an idea to any point that needs either clarification or modification. Thus each point brought up for consideration has the chance of a tough but thorough and dispassionate discussion rather than a wholesale, uncritical endorsement by fellow party members, and guaranteed rejection by the members of the opposing party members. Finally, inordinate ambition for political position will be minimized such that those who want political appointments must compete for them on the basis of proven personal competence.

Nigeria must discover for herself the true meaning of democracy in its original sense. This will mean a substantial modification of the current understanding of the term on both the Left and the Right of the political spectrum. When Rome was faced with a similar situation Aristides encouraged them to hold on to their own system of democracy – the Republic – because it was better than the Greek versions and had the advantage of being "a blend of all political systems, without the faults associated with each."<sup>12</sup> Basically a republican system is very much alive in traditional Nigerian society and can be updated to meet contemporary needs.

Dr Julius Nyerere, former President of Tanzania has already taken the bold step of attempting to give the definition of democracy an African flavour. The definition he gives and the order of priority he outlines are different from what obtains in both the Western and the Eastern world. He once declared:

Our nation has neither the long tradition of nationhood, nor the strong physical means of national security which older countries take for granted.... Development must be considered first, and other matters examined in relation to it. Our question with regard to every matter -- even the issue of freedom -- must be, "How does this affect the progress of our National Development Plan?"<sup>13</sup>

To reach an application of democracy that is more meaningful and relevant, at least two models are available to Nigeria -- the Athenian model of Greek democracy and the pioneering effort of Julius Nyerere.

#### **b. Model of Athenian Democracy**

From the Athenian model the following features already familiar to the Nigerian mentality are evident:

1. Decision was by consensus in the *EKKLESIA* or assembly.
2. The leaders were directly accountable to the community.
3. Accountability demanded that all holders of public office should not go abroad, or make donations, or administer property; and that their own personal property be held in security until they rendered the final accounts to the community.<sup>14</sup>
4. High ethical standards were expected of public officers.
5. There was political control of the armed forces and public officers to forestall such behaviours as indecent sexual behaviour and the abuse of public funds.

The Athenian democracy was indeed popular sovereignty at work. It protected the rule of law such that no individual would be able to claim immunity or place himself or herself above the law. In studying the Athenian democracy one sees that it is specifically forbidden for anyone to seize political power by force. Military regimes are denounced for the penchant for ruling by decrees rather than by the law. As Andokides points out in his *On the Mysteries*, this is unhealthy for democracy and an abuse of the constitution:

In no circumstances whatsoever may the authorities apply an unwritten law... No decree, whether of the Council or of the people, may override the law... No law applying to an individual may be passed, if it does not apply equally to all...<sup>15</sup>

In *Against Timocrates*, Demosthenes pursues the point that no established law may be repealed, save in a legislative committee; and that anyone proposing that a law be repealed should have the onus of providing a better alternative or face the possibility of an indictment under the law that deals with the proposing of detrimental laws.<sup>16</sup> This is a sure safeguard against erratic whimsical laws issued by people with no proper knowledge of the law, and who have placed themselves above the existing laws.

### c. Nyerere's Political Legacy

From Nyerere's model, the *Ujamaa* -- the Swahili word for "working together" - features similar to those that obtained under the Athenian model are evident:

1. Decision was by consensus and not arbitrary.
2. There was the in-built system for monitoring the activities of public officers.
3. The leader used persuasion rather than coercion. He therefore led rather than ruled.
4. Political education included in the secondary school programme.
5. There was political control of the military establishment.
6. The leader led by personal witness of life and example.

Nyerere captured the African mind in his propositions. He based his system on the principle that power belongs to the people. His system was socialist, but provides a direct say to the people. Seeing no need for a distinction between a ruling party and the people, Nyerere preferred a single political party to which all belonged. The prime purpose of the party was to instill a sense of national purpose and identity into the populace, a purpose which was quite well realized. C. George Kahama, a long-time government official who worked under Nyerere said of him:

We call him Moses because he gave us the tablets of *ujamaa*. With hindsight, I think those ideals have served us well. There are no riots in the streets of Tanzania. We have stability. We have basic national principles.<sup>17</sup>

In-built within the *ujamaa* system were avenues for individuals to appeal or protest against governmental decisions. The laws were simple and justice was speedy. There was also a permanent Commission of Enquiry which looked into the conduct of any person in public office to prevent abuse. Finally, the regime leaders were to apply persuasive rather than coercive means of social control, since viable socialist communities, argued Nyerere, could only be established with willing members.<sup>18</sup> Nyerere's goal was to build a society in which all members had equal rights and equal opportunities; and in which all lived at peace without anyone suffering or inflicting injustice, exploiting or being exploited.<sup>19</sup>

He incorporated political education into the Tanzanian secondary school programme and the party had a youth wing in each school. To reach the grassroots, a system was created whereby every unit of ten houses in their towns and villages was designated a "cell". The cell leader was duly elected from among them and had the responsibility of explaining party policies, mobilizing groups for work and other projects, and channeling their complaints for consideration.<sup>20</sup>

Nyerere was able to steer beyond the pulls of tribalism<sup>21</sup> and achieve a political control of the armed forces. He sought to restore to the people a sense of pride by reversing the negative, stereotypical definitions of the African by detractors.<sup>22</sup> "The average Tanzanian," he declared, "is a rather hard-headed, but essentially malleable, citizen fully capable of effecting behavioral balance which will serve both self-interest and national needs..."

In addition, Nyerere was able to effect policies that were unquestionably in the interest of both the people and democracy, and would rather have a country that is honourable and poor than one that mortgages its independence to foreign powers for the purpose of obtaining foreign aid. In his Arusha Declaration he asked:

How can we depend upon foreign governments and companies for the major part of our development without giving to those governments and countries a great part of our freedom to act as we please? The truth is that we cannot...<sup>23</sup>

Nyerere's belief was that neither political independence nor material development is truly meaningful unless the direction and operation of independent development springs from the aspirations and labour of the citizenry. Chiefly because of his belief in indigenous African values, Tanzania is the only country in Africa with a native African national and official language – Swahili.<sup>24</sup>

Besides putting together a political system, Nyerere earned for himself credibility beyond question. He attempted to live the principles of the ideology he proclaimed by pursuing a frugal style of living, shunning pomp and ceremony, and by being disposed to sacrifice some degree of economic utility in order to maintain a consistency of approach. He thereby achieved at the same time a robust, philosophically coherent alternative to the extant political systems. In addition he left an impressive legacy of personal probity and integrity that speaks volumes in the field of social and political enterprise

#### **d. Understanding Democracy and Putting It to Work**

Democracy is not an abstract label for what politicians do in parliament, nor does it stop with casting votes in the ballot box. It pervades the socio-economic life of the community. It is the people having full control of their own destiny. The first step towards democracy is by preparing the mind through education. Education, particularly formal, structured education will take full account of the central issues involved in democracy and subject them to informed and vigorous critical analysis.

Questions about what democracy consists in, the moral basis of political legitimacy, how the respect for personal rights can be observed in a democracy, how good leadership is to be distinguished from bad, and what can be done to prevent or eradicate bad leadership, must engage the attention of anyone who is genuinely interested in the democratic process.

John Dewey's description of democracy puts into sharper relief the contrast between leadership which enables human free spirit to thrive rather than being tethered to some inordinate form of external control:



Democracy is belief in the ability of human experience to generate the aims and methods by which further experience will grow in ordered richness. Every other form of moral and social faith rests upon the idea that experience must be subjected at some point or other to some form of external control; to some 'authority' alleged to exist outside the process of experience. Democracy is the faith that the process of experience is more important than any special result attained, so that special results achieved are of ultimate value only as they are used to enrich and order the ongoing process.<sup>25</sup>

Besides providing the principles for distinguishing between good and bad leadership, between good and bad government, the democratic principle is also interested in such other questions as, what it means to say that power belongs to the people; what the basis of popular sovereignty is, and what power and legitimate authority consist in. More globally, there could arise the question as to whether the sovereignty of one nation could legitimately override that of another. If the theory is well understood, the application is easier to put into effect.

Familiarity with the central issues prepares the mind of the student more than the actual experience (in the role of a spectator) of politicians at work. They are able to distinguish good politics from bad, genuine political point and rhetoric, true patriotism from pretence.

The questions proposed above are clearly complex ones requiring a considerable amount of intellectual competence in the field of history of ideas. This competence does not come overnight but must be built up over time by the students being exposed to simpler issues in their junior school years. Students can address such questions as: What makes a good leader? How do you distinguish between a good leader and a bad one? What does it mean to be law-abiding? Why be law abiding? In what consists political legitimacy? Such questions lend themselves to an analytic approach, which is by no means the only approach. A historical approach is also possible and useful. In a historical approach, students might begin on the global scale to study the lives of people whose greatness was as a result of rendering political or other service to their country - George Washington, Mahatma Gandhi, Charles de Gaulle, Winston Churchill, Mao Tse Tung, Vladimir Lenin, Otto von Bismarck, Kwame Nkrumah. The specific things that earned them a place in history -- fighting for their country or judicious, selfless leadership in serving or uniting their country -- would be able to inform, inspire and motivate the students. Then the contributions of specific national figures to specific national issues can provide yet more inspiration for the young.

Education supplies the enlightenment required for effective application of the universal suffrage which Nigerians already enjoy. As Mortimer J. Adler points out, without education universal suffrage produces an ignorant electorate and amounts to a travesty of democratic institutions and processes. The one without the other is a perilous delusion. In the past as Nigeria tried to grapple with Western-style democracy, it was sufficient for someone to stand up and tell his people: "I want you to vote for so-and-so; see his picture; his electoral symbol is so-and-so; just press your inked thumb on the little square besides his picture." The result was always complete chaos, and most of the time the ballots were manipulated. The words of Mortimer J. Adler hold true when he said: 'Suffrage without schooling produces mobocracy not democracy -- not the rule of law, not constitutional government by the people as well as for them'.<sup>26</sup>

The *mobocracy* that seems to have been Nigeria's lot has shown itself in seven military coups and only two constitutional governments in twenty-nine years.

Nigeria's road to democracy has been checkered by the constant involvement of the military in government. In 1985 the then Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters, Major General 'Tunde Idiagbon, came out on television to say: **WE ARE NOT RUNNING A DEMOCRACY!**, and warned vocal malcontents of the dire consequences of their activities. It is not a little impudent to gloat over the idea of having trampled on democracy. It is questionable if Nigeria can understand democracy while operating a dictatorship.

Some people have proposed Diarchy as a way to pacify the military while operating a full democracy.<sup>27</sup> Diarchy is not a viable option for the following reasons: The military establishment is all about issuing and obeying orders. Their rule is by decree and they get to implement them through the barrel of the gun. Their entry into government is through seizing power by force. On accession to power their first act is usually to suspend the country's constitution and issue such decrees as suits them. By such acts the military fail to be bound by the constitution, fail in respect for the democratic process and impose their presence, on an intimidated citizenry.<sup>28</sup> They institutionalize force as a way of getting into power.

## 2. The Possibility of Moral Education Building on the Strengths of Traditional Cultures

It behoves the educational system to provide opportunity for the pupils to learn about the traditional cultures and values. The moral values of any society have to do with the level and character of its social development, since social values tend to define the proper conduct in relations among people in society. In Nigeria there has been considerable evolution from the traditional values and practices, and resulting in an interplay of traditional, Christian, Islamic and Western secular values.

The traditional values, however, still maintain a hold, even though they have been technically forced into the shadows. Among the traditional values, the family occupies a high position. The family remains a necessary unit of organization, and the larger unit, the village, was either an extended family or a union of families. It was necessary to maintain the solidarity of the family in order to hold it together. Family loyalty extends to the ancestors. The image of the ancestors and the power of the elders as custodians of the *Ofó*, the symbol of authority (for the Igbos), also became the mystical *Ofó* and the principle of justice and righteousness which regulated relations among people became *Ofó-na-ógù*, *ógù* being the mystical symbol of innocence and uprightness.<sup>29</sup>

The moral values of the traditional Nigerian society were universally applicable within the community: namely, truthfulness, honesty and self control. Their objectivity was never in dispute. So they were backed up by sanctions. Moral lapses on the part of any member of the community were a concern of everybody. The prescriptions were clear, simple to understand, and human- rather than system-oriented. That meant that everyone was accountable for whatever he or she did at every stage. People were expected to seek their preferences within the defined areas of the community. One had the possibility of initiative in things that could be reckoned as good and helpful. Eccentricities of conduct of a questionable type would, however, meet with decisive censure. Sensitive areas in this regard were marriage and sexuality.

The state of affairs just described might seem like a situation of collectivization where peremptory seigniorial authority was operational and absolute. This is not the case. On the contrary, individual freedoms were guaranteed within the community. Property rights remained inviolable: freedom of speech, movement and association were

not infringed upon within the arrangement. On the other hand, the community often assumed responsibility for the individual. In ancient times a community was willing to assume the responsibility for making redress on behalf of a member who caused the death of someone in another community, or going to war on behalf of a member who was killed or harmed. Thus, looked at from the outside, it would seem the individual was lost in the collective. The contrary was the case. The individual mattered so much that anything that hurt him or her was taken as having hurt the entire community. The individual was therefore, in a sense, lost-and-found.

In traditional society the authority of the elders practically controlled the life of the community. But that authority was not arbitrarily sought, it had to be balanced with a proven life of probity or the elder would be likely to suffer disgrace. When people follow the injunctions of the elders, it was in the understanding that time had more or less tested them and, as the saying goes, "those who aspire to greatness had better watch dance steps of the great" (an Igbo proverb). The authority they enjoy is, above all, earned moral authority that falls to them as teachers of the community. Their teachings are mostly directed to the young, and consist in outlining their duties towards their elders. The logic is that the elder, having learnt his or her own lessons in youth has the opportunity to apply in practice what he or she demands of the young. The young need preparation for adult life.

Through the many stages of initiation, the young learn lessons in endurance, humility, self-discipline, courage, creativity. These virtues are expected to be the bedrock of their adult life and they will be able to be the kind of elders to whom the young could meaningfully look for guidance. The role of the elder as teacher is manifold: he or she instructs as well as provides an example with his or her own life.

Traditional Nigerian society laid more emphasis on the spiritual and social dimensions of human nature. Part of the formation of the young was to impress on them the religious view of life; respect for the divine and the human; respect for life and for authority; the dignity of labour and the value of justice, truthfulness, simplicity of life; and consideration for other people's needs and feelings. In view of a religious conception of the world, any tendency towards materialism, acquisition of wealth by foul means, ostentation, arrogance in power, or mediocrity, are roundly discouraged.

For a distinctively Nigerian approach, therefore, it is indispensable to try to a) work in harmony with the mentality of the people rather than impose things that are strange to them; b) respect traditional methods of proven value; c) make more extensive use of

the interactive method; d) highlight the human, spiritual and political values of the country; e) begin moral education early in a child's life. f) respect traditional values and institutions rather than arbitrarily seek to overthrow them.

#### **a. Working in Harmony with the Mentality of the People**

There are three most dominant political entities on the national scene -- the Hausa-Fulani, the Igbos, the Yorubas -- often cynically referred to as the "*Big Three*." Every Nigerian has felt their overall impact in the country and presumes some kind of insight as to how to deal with them. For any programme of moral education to be effective in Nigeria, it must take account of their considerable influence, their best as well as their worst traits, without prejudice to the immense contributions other peoples are capable of making in this regard, and everything could be put together to provide a comprehensive as well as effective backdrop for moral education.

The Hausa-Fulani are admired for the astuteness in business, honesty and simplicity of life, loyalty and total commitment to any cause they believe in<sup>30</sup>. On the other hand they are feared for their belligerence and criticised for what would appear to be a monolithic and fanatical commitment to the Islamic cause over and above any other national commitment.

The Igbos are admired for their intelligence, their bold, aggressively competitive and indomitable spirit, versatility and adaptability to all situations. But they are criticised for stand-offishness that borders on arrogance when relating to other Nigerians, and for non-acknowledgement of social rank.

The Yorubas are admired for their learning, pragmatic business skills, and commitment to culture. But they are criticised for their political opportunism which makes them rather unreliable partners in matters of agreements, and for pasturing only where the grass is greenest.

During the Nigerian civil war (1967-1970), a popular stereotype, which tends to persist till today<sup>31</sup>, got into popular conversational reference, as Donatus Nwoga observes:

...[I]f three Nigerians, one Igbo, one Hausa, the other Yoruba found themselves under a ripe coconut, the Hausa would say, "If Allah sends down this coconut, I will eat it"; the Yoruba would say, "I will wait here and whoever brings down the coconut, I will share it with him"; whereas the Igbo man would look for some implement for bringing down the coconut.<sup>32</sup>

### **b. Respecting the Traditional Methods of Proven Value**

The most important thing in this regard is the central place given to a role model or an exemplar or coach in providing leadership and inspiring virtue in the young. This approach has proven so effective in the past, and with a little updating, is likely to prove effective for the present needs. In his inaugural lecture at the Institute of Education of the University of London, Professor R.S. Peters preferred the word "initiation" to either "instruction" or "teaching" when talking of moral education. He argued that education involves essentially a process by which we transmit what is valuable in an intelligible way, and that it is largely a matter of *knowing how*, rather than of knowing that.<sup>33</sup> Professor Peters' insight bears out the inclination towards imitation (or emulation), and thus lends more moral significance to example than to precepts. The teacher as exemplar is more identifiable with the transmissory method rather than that of teaching principles. It is like learning to dance by dancing rather than by reading about dances.

Whether in or outside of the classroom, in so far as the practices are meaningfully handed on, the aim has been achieved. The morally educated Nigerian will, at the end of the day, be equipped to pursue a high moral standard of behaviour, since moral conduct cannot be derived from definitions alone any more than food can be derived from cook books. Teachers, parents, adults, everyone will be able to be a good influence in society through examples rather than by words and precepts alone.

### **c. Respecting the Traditional Institutions and Learning From Them**

In most parts of Nigeria, the masquerade institution is not simply an entertainment showpiece. Besides the elements of cult and entertainment, the masquerade institution provides for the security of property. In this regard anything "entrusted" to the masquerades would be strung with palm fronds and would be absolutely out of bounds to anybody. In addition masquerades are responsible for enforcing society's laws, disciplining defaulters and offenders, irrespective of the latter's social status. For the purpose of the subject of effective moral education the most interesting activity of the masquerades is the use of symbolic actions in teaching moral lessons, as Professor Nwoga's story shows in Chapter 7 Section 5c.

There exist some traditional institutions and pressure groups like the age grade, the elders, the powerful *úmù-ada* or *úmù-mgbótò*<sup>\*</sup>, with various degrees of capacity for exercising pressure on individuals or groups in order to protect the interests of the community.

#### d. More Increased Use of the Interactive Method

Considerable space was dedicated to the description in Chapter Three of the central position enjoyed by the interactive approach in the process of traditional moral education. At every stage of the story-telling, riddles, proverbs, the student was always actively involved, and his or her response was solicited at every stage.

A distinctly Nigerian approach must not neglect, but recognize the fact that effective learning on the practical level engages the entire human faculties of sense, emotion and intellect. So often there is the tendency to identify education with mental activity alone: for example, what insights we gain, what conclusions we draw. Such mental processes are important but they do not exhaust the meaning of moral, or any other type of education. Theories must be supplemented with experience and practice; intellectual persuasion must be tempered with openness of mind.

In the kind of learning that leads to moral and spiritual growth, the mind, the heart and the will must work harmoniously together. The best method of teaching children and most categories of people seems to be by repeated practice. The same action is done over and over again under the eye of some guide or tutor until they acquire the habit of doing it well. Since virtue has been shown to be all about forming good habits, the method of repeated action is vindicated. If on the other hand all reliance is on rules committed to memory, the memory quite frequently fails and one is left utterly confused.

#### e. Highlighting the Human, Spiritual, and Political Values

Because of the socio-political, ethico-religious situation that make Nigeria a pluralist society, a distinctly Nigerian approach to moral education must incorporate within its areas of interest whatever will enable the students to respond correctly and appropriately

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\*. The *úmù-ada* are all women born in the same town but married elsewhere. In situations of grave tension they would step in and are unstoppable in their prescriptions or exactions. People would not want to enter into any confrontation with them for they will always win, since traditional practices grant them total immunity from molestation.

to the situation in the society in which they belong. Such principles as justice, honesty, kindness, love, patriotism, patience, courage, piety, respect for authority, obedience should be explained in all their implications and how they apply in the life of the individual as well as that of the community. Here such values as industry, probity, accountability and autonomy are inculcated.

#### **f. Beginning the Child's Moral Education Early Enough in Life**

Borrowing a leaf from the traditional Nigerian methods, where the process of initiation begins at the earliest opportunity possible, the moral education of children should begin from a very early age. John Locke's belief is that it is possible for the teacher to guide the young much more easily away from any immoral habit to which they might be inclined through a gentle application of authority while they are still young, than when they are older thereby finds a Nigerian context. As Locke points out, "the peculiar physiognomy of the mind is more discernible in children, before art and cunning have taught them to hide their deformities, and conceal their ill inclinations under a dissembled outside."<sup>34</sup>

The traditional initiation rites are an example of how children can be gradually introduced to the demands and realities of life. There are various stages of initiation corresponding to various stages of development. The very young go through programmes that they can physically and mentally cope with. The programme gets physically tougher and mentally more demanding as the age and development increases. The very young begin with simple facts of life and action and are given the explanations behind each item or action. Later they would be increasingly prepared to make their own decisions based on the progressive increase in their knowledge and understanding he or she has acquired over a period of time. The specific instructions and explanations on a variety of issues disabuse their minds of some negative or inadequate preconceptions or inclinations that might lead to socially and morally unacceptable behaviour. Thus if a child is brought up to acquire and prefer good habits to bad, difficulties, if any, will be minimal in adapting to sound moral principles in more complex circumstance that might arise in adulthood.

The ground for good moral habits can be prepared in children if from the earliest years they are taught to value and apply the elementary rules of etiquette and social conduct -- respect for orderliness in daily life and social interaction. Orderliness itself



will preclude disruptive or inappropriate behaviour in school, in class, at work or play, and at worship.

At a yet higher level, the students will be exposed to the rules of school discipline. Those who fail to abide by them will be censured in such a way as to help them to realize and appreciate the reasons for good behaviour. With the school rules, the background has been prepared for formation of character in accordance with moral rules and the rules required for good citizenship.

While at this early stage, which corresponds to the first level of the first stage of Kohlberg's three-tier development<sup>35</sup>, to Erikson's first stage of basic trust vs basic mistrust, and to Piaget's concrete-operational level<sup>36</sup>, the child is amenable to take on whatever is presented to him or her because of his or her 'obedience and punishment orientation' and 'egoistic deference to superior power'. He or she would be pre-disposed to perform actions because they have been commanded or refrain from actions because they have been forbidden. Since moral education is not to be limited to the school, pre-school moral education at the stage corresponding to Piaget's pre-operational stage would fall within the roles of the family.

As regards the religious aspects of moral education, simple stories from the Bible, the Koran, or traditional folklore can be used and the children would be guided and encouraged to identify the moral lessons in them. In the process of towards teaching the principles of good conduct in schools, it is not enough to recite Biblical and Koranic injunctions, and urge pupils to obey them. Such an approach will be too abrupt and superficial, and the children would be unable to relate to them in their ordinary day-to-day activities.

### **3. The Possibility of Religious Education Which Builds on Common Factors While Also Promoting Understanding of Differences**

In her book *Modeling Religious Education for the Future*, Gloria Durka points out that religious education should be geared to developing communities in which people can live more comfortably with change than with rigidity.<sup>37</sup>

The religious education Nigeria needs is one that will nurture understanding and mutual concord rather than contention and rancour. It must be able to help the members of the different communions hold to their proper roots while intelligently and positively relating to others. In a pluralistic situation like that of Nigeria, religious education must

take account of, and emphasize, the shared values, and explain why the differences, where they exist, should not lead to the denigration or triumphalism of a given religious tradition in the face of others.

The plurality of religious traditions is an opportunity for growth forbearance, mutual respect, courtesy and hospitality, mutual dialogue and co-operation. It should be able to orient the believers of the different faiths towards one another while still remaining themselves.<sup>39</sup> It should enable everyone -- Christian, Muslim, and practitioner of Traditional Religion -- to see each other not as enemies and rivals to be beaten, or as disciples to be won over, but as friends and equals with whom one could share as brothers and sisters, the best there is in common human existence.

As a concrete measure in Nigeria it is possible periodically to invite guest speakers who are members of the different communions to the school to talk candidly about their own religions with as much insight as they can muster, and answer questions that might arise from their talk in order to clarify the points to the students.

Better still, the entire course can take the form of a seminar whereby main presenters are experts in the various religions and ensuing discussions can clarify a lot of the points that touch on the various aspects of the religions under discussion. By the time the student has gone through a series of discussions about the concept of God, the world and the place of human's in it; the notion of the ultimate and the supernatural in general; elements of worship and belief; time, eternity, the good life, suffering, happiness, sacrifice, salvation as understood in the various religions, he or she would have attained a high level of understanding across a wide spectrum beyond his or her own religion.

Such points will aid the students in their reading to identify the central ideas and questions in each religion and how they are related to each other in the various religions. The best bet would be a round table situation where each religion is allowed to hold its own and speak for itself without any single religion claiming a pride of place among others. In the next chapter a more detailed outline will be laid out to form the points of reference for such presentations.

The Hindu belief that every human being, every group and every nation, has an individuality worthy of reverence, is slowly gaining ground. Such a view requires that freedom be allowed to every group to cultivate what is most distinctive and characteristic of it. Hinduism can be an example here. Later in its history, it developed an attitude of comprehensive charity instead of a fanatic faith in an inflexible creed. It accepted

the multiplicity of aboriginal gods and others which originated, most of them outside the Aryan tradition, and justified them all. It brought together into one whole all believers in God. As a result, many sects professing many different beliefs live together within the Hindu fold and heresy-hunting is singularly absent from Hinduism.<sup>39</sup>

This Hindu attitude presents quite a challenge to Christianity and Islam. As Ali Mazrui aptly observed,<sup>40</sup> even though they have within their teachings important provisions for tolerance, love and restraint, there is something within Christianity and Islam that promotes competition rather than tolerance, namely their strict monotheism. According to Mazrui, himself a Muslim, monotheism is a doctrine of divine monopoly: there is only one God who is absolute and admits of no rivalry. It is in the interplay between absolutism and monopoly that intolerance is born. In contrast, concludes Mazrui, religions that acknowledge the existence of many gods, (most traditional religions fall into this category), are not specially incensed when one more group comes along and claims gods of its own.

## Notes

1. The Biafran crisis has continually raised the question in Nigeria as to which system serves best in protecting the interest of all groups. Nigeria is a federation but claims are that Igbos were singled out for decimation in the pogroms of 1966 and no longer feeling safe under the umbrella of Nigeria, wanted self-determination. The secession did not work out and there are suggestions in some quarters that a looser form of federation might be able to pacify all the groups so that none would feel cheated or swallowed up.
2. Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1979), Chapter II, 22.
3. Gutmann, Amy, Democratic Education, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987, p.136.
4. *ibid.*
5. *ibid.*
6. In spite of its weaknesses nationalism can be described as a political virtue; it is a "virtue of the moment", so to speak; just as courage could be described as a virtue of the moment, since it comes into play whenever the situation warrants its manifestation. And when the situation is resolved it yields place to the more perfect and more sober form of patriotism. The term "political virtue" must needs be clarified a bit. A "political virtue" is not necessarily a moral virtue. As a matter of fact it can sometimes constitute an obstacle in the way of moral virtue, especially when the reasoning behind it is merely one about securing a political advantage rather than consideration for morals. The consideration here is when it is morally neutral, that is, when it is amoral.
7. Lepp, Ignace, The Authentic Morality, Translated by Bernard Murchland, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1985, p.131-135.
8. By territorialism here I mean a fascination for laying claims to some territory as a way of asserting own sovereignty. It is territorialism that is the motivating force for all the other characteristics subsequently identified.
9. Recent political developments in the Eastern Bloc countries are rapidly rendering this distinction out of date.
10. The substance of Nigeria's non-alignment was a major topic of discussion in 1969. Because of the Civil War experience, Nigeria was able to expand ties with the Soviet Union without feeling constrained by the Western powers. This expansion of ties had the further effect

of deterring greater interference by Western powers (on the side of Biafra) and ensuring support from the radical members of the OAU. (cf. Stremlau, John J., The International Politics of the Nigerian Civil War, 1967-1970, p.378.

11. The zero-party system has been tried in Nepal, but recent unrests in that country give the impression that it had failed. What did actually undermine it was the country's king's undisguised despotism which he disguised under the name of a zero party while he retained limitless political and legislative powers for himself alone. Therefore the zero-party was not given the opportunity to thrive and therefore Nepal's case could hardly be cited absolutely without qualification.
12. Aristides, To Rome 9.
13. Nyerere, Julius, President Nyerere Opens Dar es Salaam University College Campus, 21 August, 1964, Dar es Salaam: Ministry of Information and Tourism, 1987, p.17.
14. Aischines, Against Ktesiphon 9-12, See Rodenwald, p.12.
15. Andokides, On the Mysteries 82-87, See Rodenwald, p.20.
16. Demosthenes, Against Timocrates 33, Rodenwald, p.21.
17. Henry, Neil, "Nyerere Bows Out With Tanzania in Deep Decline", The Washington Post, Wednesday, September 26, 1990, p.A21.
18. Nyerere, Julius, Interim Constitution of Tanganyika 1965, Dar es Salaam, Government Printer, 1967, p.32.
19. See Nellio, John R., A Theory of Ideology: the Tanzanian Example, Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1982 p.102.
20. One's instincts would send an immediate caution signal here; what starts off in pursuance of an ideal of reaching out to the grassroots can later degenerate into a system of governmental control - the secret police who are government informants against fellow citizens. Nyerere's experiment never came to that but no one should be so naive as to rule out the possibility of such a development.
21. In a tribute to Nyerere as he bowed out finally from the political scene, an unnamed American official resident in Tanzania said of his impact on the national life of his country: "Even though there are 120 tribes here, I also think Tanzania has a larger sense of national identity than most countries in Africa." (cf Henry, Neil, "Nyerere Bows Out With

Tanzania in Deep Decline", The Washington Post, Wednesday, September 26, 1990, p.A21.

22. In December 1962, American Democratic Senator Ellender of the State of Louisiana at a news conference in Southern Rhodesia, in apparent defence of white oligarchy in that country said: "The average African is incapable of leadership except through the assistance of Europeans." *Time Magazine*, December 7, 1962 p.22.
23. Nyerere, Julius, The Arusha Declaration, TANU's Policy on Socialism and Self-Reliance, Dar es Salaam, Government Printer, 1987, pp.10-11.
24. Henry, Neil, Washington Post, *ibid*.
25. Dewey, John, "Creative Democracy -- the Task Before Us," The Philosophy of the Common Man: Essays in Honour of John Dewey to Celebrate His Eightieth Birthday, ed. by Sidney Ratner, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1940, pp.220f.; See also, Freeman, Eugene, (Ed), The Abdication of Philosophy: Philosophy and the Public Good, Illinois: Open Court La Salle, 1976, p.102.
26. Adler, op. cit. p.3.
27. Diarchy is a Greek concept first proposed as an ideological option for Nigeria by Nigeria's former President, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe. It is a system whereby there would be two wings of government -- the civilian and the military. Under this arrangement there will be no necessity for the military to try to overthrow constitutional government, since they would already be part of it. This over optimistic view is not borne out by facts since of the six military coups carried out in Nigeria since independence, only two have been against an elected government. The rest have been military against military.
28. The General Provisions Part I no 1 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria states as follows: "This Constitution is supreme and its provisions shall have binding force on all authorities and persons throughout the Federal Republic of Nigeria." Yet in the tumultuous 1966 alone five (Suspension and Modification) Decrees 1, 17 n.3, 50 n.7, 55 n.8, 69 n.10, were promulgated by the military. Later in 1967 the Repeal and Restoration Decree and the Constitution (Miscellaneous Provisions) Decree followed. What is more the Military Government issued in 1970 The Federal Military Government (Supremacy and Enforcement of Powers) Decree. By this decree, they decisively placed the Constitutions underfoot and made themselves above every law.

(Source: The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (With the Amendments), 1979, pp.143-144.

29. Nwala, T.U., Changing Morals and social Development in Nigeria, Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1984, p.29. In the Igbo language, when someone has done something that has severely upset someone, the aggrieved person would manifest his outrage in the expression: "*OFO-NA-OGU MAKWA GI!*" -- literally: may *òfó-na-ógù* catch up with you! ie, may you be condemned in the name of everything that is right and just!
30. A seeming generalization can be justifiable here, and in the case of the Igbos and Yorubas as well, since its end result is not cast a slur on any group but to highlight some views widely held among Nigerians from practically every part of the country.
31. This anecdote is often repeated for lighthearted amusement and is not invoked as an appeal to stereotypes.
32. Nwoga, Donatus I., Nka Na Nzere, The Focus of Igbo World View, Ahiajoku Lecture 1984, Owerri: Ministry of Information, Culture, Youth and Sports, 1984, pp. 2-3.
33. Peters, R.S., Education as Initiation, London: George G. Harrap & Company Ltd, 1964, p.33.
34. Locke, John, Some Thoughts on Education, section 101.
35. cf. Kohlberg, Lawrence, "Moral Development, Religious Education and the Public Schools: A Developmental View", Religion and Public Education, Edited by TheodoreSizer, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967, pp.71-72.
36. Piaget's Sensori-motor and pre-operational levels (covering between 18 months and 8 years) cannot realistically be applicable in a school situation even though they reach down to a very early stage of a child's development. They would apply more to the family than the school. The upper age limit of 8 years which Piaget assigned to this level can be deceptive when compared with the kind of activity it is meant to cover. The concrete-operational stage was therefore chosen because it is quite compatible with the earliest years of school.
37. Durka, Gloria, "Modeling Religious Education for the Future," The Religious Education We Need, Mishwaka Indiana: Religious Education Press Inc. 1977, p.97.

38. Iddings Bell, Bernard, Crisis in Education, New York, London, Toronto: McGraw-Hill Book Company Inc., 1949, p.156.
39. See Radhakrishnan, Sir Sarvepalli, The Hindu View of Life, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1926, pp.15-25.
40. Mazrui, Ali A., World Culture and the Black Experience, Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1974, p.8.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### MORAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: A MODEL

*You have already been told what is right and what the Lord wants of you. Only this, to do what is right, to love loyalty and to walk humbly with your God.*  
– MICAH 6:8.

*Men enjoy a great number of blessings in consequence of knowing themselves, and incur a great number of evils, through being deceived in themselves. For they who know themselves know what is suitable for them and distinguish between what they can do and what they cannot; and, by doing what they know how to do, procure for themselves what they need, and are prosperous, and, by abstaining from what they do not know, live blamelessly, and avoid being unfortunate... they can... obtain for themselves what is good and guard against what is evil.*  
– SÓCRATES.

At the end of Chapter Five, the question arose as to which elements of Western theory are adaptable to the Nigerian situation. Some effort will be made to respond to the question by proposing a model moral education for Nigeria. A model moral education programme for Nigeria must be comprehensive, incorporating in the same package aspects of political, moral and religious education. A discussion on such a programme must pay considerable attention, among others, to the school itself, the kind of teachers required for the work, the type of students and dispositions, and the nature, content, depth and breadth of the course, the methods required for an effective programme.

It is the contention of this thesis that for an effective moral education in pluralist Nigeria, an integrated set of basic values and ethical principles drawn from the moral, religious and political life of the country and some Western ethical theories must be sought. Values are either directly transmitted through succeeding generations, (in which case the school is not required); or they first undergo a process of critical analysis and perhaps some form of adaptation and modification before being adopted, (in which case the school is indispensable).

The school has the unique role of generating ideas and introducing a degree of co-ordinated reflective analysis and theory that are beyond the possibilities of informal home or denominational approaches.

By virtue of their professional competence, the educators are able to draw together from a variety of sources sufficient material for an integrated, but comprehensive scheme. The more comprehensive the content, the higher the skill required for integrating it.

An integrated scheme would require a combination of the transmissory approach and methods of analysis of principles and theories. Since moral education refers to a serious, structured body of decisional, cognitive and affective skills meant to accompany human action, educators in such skills should not resort to brainwashing, conditioning, propaganda, or any such negative approaches, but should adopt the recognized method of exposition and analysis applied in order fields of learning. They should, in addition try to live out what they teach.

The students for their part must, in the words of Bernard Lonergan, be "attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible" in pursuing the "perspectival character of many view points", and should not be caught up in narrow and divisive sectarian viewpoints.

## 1. The School

A model school should address among others the question of the organizational structure of the schools, the suitability of the atmosphere for effective learning, the suitability and competence of the instructors and such factors as morale that enhance the instructor's performance. The school must possess the required organizational structure. A. Etzioni has suggested four centres of focus regarding the nature of any organization, namely:

- a) the normative definition of the institution (its values and norms;
- b) its place within the wider framework;
- c) the integration of the various groups
- d) the ordering of role relationships within the organization.<sup>1</sup>

G.E. Jensen proposed that attention be focused rather on "the work structure, the authority structure, the communications structure, the power structure..."<sup>2</sup>

Both models can be combined in one model for Nigeria, especially if a transition is to be made from the consideration of the school as a structural organization to one in terms of a goal orientation. The Etzioni model provides a useful prop for a Nigerian model, for one can move from the normative definition of the values and norms of the

school (a), to those of the larger society (b), as well as work for the goal of integration of the various groups (c), and the ordering of relationships such as instructor-pupil relationships, pupil-pupil relationships, modes of discipline, etc. It is on the level of (d) that the Jensenian model comes into play.

The School has an important role in forming the minds of the young to understand and foster such principles as discipline and goodwill so necessary for building up a united country. It can produce the desirable intellectual and moral changes, and such changes in attitudes and dispositions of thought and purpose, as can give society its best stature.

The great task of societal improvement, regeneration, integration and continuity, is best accomplished when the underlying principles are well understood and then applied. The school brings this about by its ability to generate, promote and sustain ideas needful for human, social and intellectual development. With respect to realizing the goal of unity and national cohesion, it can provide the relevant civics lessons designed for the inculcation of some national and civic values like unity, tolerance, and co-operation.

The school sets it as part of its task:

- a) to show that there is no necessary opposition between national values and personal or ethnic values.
- b) to foster national feelings and attitudes as alternatives to parochial ones, and show how national feelings can lead to greater advantages for the national life.
- c) to remove underlying fears by making everyone realize how for national survival in the modern world, unity is strength, and living and working together, sharing the fruits of interdependence, are indispensable.

To the school therefore falls the task of providing the experiences through which students develop the fullest complement of patterns necessary to the success of the democratic experiment. Among the patterns are those of home-making; of skilful production of things and ideals; of appreciation of the good and the beautiful, the true and the just; of intelligent choice from among alternative and often conflicting moral, socio-political and economic goals. The school accomplishes its task by providing the forum and all the human, social and natural sciences needful for the proper discussion and utilization of the patterns.

Sometimes, as Etzioni's model shows, the school projects some values which often include those of the larger society. The teacher's task is to invite and encourage the pupils to identify with the values so projected, not by simply learning them by rote, but by trying to understand the reason behind them. Education involves, as John Wilson points out, "initiating people into various forms of thought and activity in such a way that they are helped to become more well-informed, understanding, and reasonable"<sup>3</sup>. They would then be able to make independent use of these forms of thought as a useful tool for determining motives, assessing situations and making moral decisions that affect their lives and those of others. In this sense that the activity of teaching can be regarded as a process of initiation<sup>4</sup>.

## 2. The Model Educator

The moral educator is first and foremost a leader. In discussing the characteristics of a moral educator Harold Loukes gives three models of leaders following Max Weber's famous three models of leaders<sup>5</sup>. Weber had based his typology on three prevailing conceptions of authority. There is the traditional type who wields the power of tradition. Next there is the legal-rational type, resting on the theory of government by consensus, in which people choose, by rationally devised procedures, those most fitted to take decisions in particular areas, and whose authority is then limited to those areas alone. Then there is the charismatic type that arises when current institutionalized authority gets out of touch with the needs of the people: illustrated in Socrates, Jesus, Luther, Gandhi, Hitler.<sup>6</sup>

Each of the three types has a different view about morals, and hence about moral education. The authoritarian type claims in some form or other to be the arbiter of morals and would perceive his or her role as that of *training* the pupils in good moral habits, self-control, acceptance and adjustment. The legal-rational type is less inclined to appeal to tradition, or to the emotions, or to the force of his or her own personality. Rather, he or she operates on the basis acknowledged or acknowledgeable facts and reason. The charismatic type, for his or her part, believes that good morality grows spontaneously if only children are not thwarted and distorted. In the view of the charismatic type, the instinctive life, if it is allowed to strike its roots, will flower in tenderness, compassion and willing for others. He or she is lively and imaginative, humorous, warmly affectionate, "on the pupils' wavelength", persuasive, rather than

coercive. Where the authoritarian teacher would say, "I am telling you", or "Do this now", the charismatic teacher says "Let's find out", or "Wouldn't it be fun to know"?'

The differences of types are also accompanied by differences of approach. While the authoritarian sets out to propound the mores and enforce a moral code which the pupils must acquire, the legal-rational type looks for what is reasonable, opportune, and possible. The charismatic type for his or her part is a loving person who injects into the group situation a warm life. He or she might be permissive but challenging, and creates a climate favourable to growth. The effectiveness or otherwise of any of the approaches depends on the type of persons they teach and the type of response they get. Since pupils are not normally pre-sorted according to types and one person's criteria for classification is often in conflict with another's, neither the authoritarian nor the legal-rational, nor the charismatic label should, alone by itself, be the overriding concern in determining the best moral educator.

More importantly, every typology tends to be reductionist, such that people will tend to strain into another person's behaviour a typology which they had preconceived. The result is chaos. Above all, while the authoritarian approach might be obnoxious to some, the permissive happy-go-lucky approach might be intolerable to others. *In medio stat virtus*, i.e., virtue stands in the middle. It is by this fact that the legal-rational type has an edge over the other two. The ideal moral educator should, in fact be able to blend all the three characteristics in him or herself. That means that any human being so ever can be a moral educator provided that he or she is capable of blending the self-confidence of the of the authoritarian with the cautious modesty of the legal-rational, and the effusiveness of the charismatic.

Harold Loukes makes this point in his own contribution to the question. According to him the primary condition is that such a one "be morally educated in the first place", and exhibit such human characteristics which might be summarized as humility, frankness, humaneness. Loukes wants the authoritarian to be tolerant, the conformist to accept the non-conformist, and the edgy to know what it means for someone else to suffer:

I welcome the authoritarian personality so long as he has learnt to take people seriously, and also the tolerant personality so long as he has learnt to abide by certain rules and not to tolerate the intolerable. I welcome the serene conformist who accepts the habit of the school community as long as he learns to accept as persons those who don't; and also the edgy neurotic who knows what it is to suffer, provided he also knows what it is for someone else to suffer. Let them all come, I say, as long as they have learnt what I want them to learn.<sup>8</sup>

The moral educator should have learned to live, by living in a community whose rules have been open to rational criticism. A good scientist is one who has learnt his way about the conceptual structure, methods of verification, customary procedures, even to the point of challenging or modifying those procedures. One will not be reckoned a good scientist unless he or she can present his or her challenge in accepted language. In the same way, the moral educator must have learned, and be ready to use, the language of accepted rule system, and if he or she wants to challenge a rule, he or she should be able to do so in the language of a rule system. In effect, he or she must therefore have learnt to support "rules", even when he or she wants to revise particular rules. He or she must either accept an existing rule or present in the proper place for decision-making a viable alternative.

A further question arises as to whether the moral educator should be primarily an intellectual. That could hardly be feasible. In the first place, moral education is not simply a matter of intellectual prowess, and morality is applicable to us all because of our common membership of the human society, rather than our intellectual ability to grasp or propound ethical theories. Therefore, though intellectual abilities are important, they should not be the primary concern in deciding the one's suitability as a moral educator. It is only ordinary people, who do not place themselves on any special pedestal, but are disposed to understand others and empathize with them, that can most effectively perform the task of moral education. It is not the "saints" in the sense Susan Wolf described in her essay, (see Chapter 5 B:4), or geniuses, or visionaries, unless the latter have the capacity to be ordinary.

The moral educator will also be a teacher of something other than morals. It is from his or her overall ability both to inspire and educate in that other field that establishes his or her credentials as a potential moral educator for, some of the most important moral lessons are learnt in the course of something else.

A good moral educator takes the pupils seriously into account and does not indoctrinate them by trying to impose his or her own views and judgments. He or she

presents the material in such a form that the pupils see for themselves rather than learn by rote, or accept without understanding. He or she works towards pupil-response rather than pupil-acceptance. In the long run he or she works toward making the pupils his or her equals who know all he or she knows, equalling him or her in skill, but not necessarily believing what he or she believes.

The moral educator will sympathize with the pupils' state of mind -- their ignorance, their difficulties, their fatigue. He or she will teach by rigorously assembling the facts of the case before allowing judgment to be passed; drawing out from the facts general propositions, and testing the general propositions against the facts. In doing this the educator enables his or her pupils to apply to their own studies principles they had grasped.

As Harold Loukes points out, "a good *teacher* is (in general) a *good* teacher"<sup>9</sup>. He or she is therefore aware that there are moral dimensions and implications to anything he or she does, and would endeavour to lend credibility to his or her teachings by a witness of life. Plato's Socrates, for example, thinks that character formation is an important aim of education, and that an expert in educational methods who is also an expert in human values is required to achieve this. In other words, much more than the enunciation of precepts, virtues to be inculcated must come in the form of good example. The "teacher's" virtue is the chief element in his or her teaching and emulation is the chief element in the pupils' learning.

L.P. Jacks gives an interesting anecdote that illustrates the importance of the personal life of the educator in insuring the effectiveness of his or her teaching:

Not long ago I met one of our great school masters -- a veteran in that high service. 'Where in your time-table do you teach religion?' I asked him. 'We teach it all day long,' he answered. 'We teach it in Arithmetic, by accuracy. We teach it in language, by learning to say what we mean - "Yea, yea, and nay, nay." We teach it in history, by humanity. We teach it in geography, by breadth of mind. We teach it in handicraft, by thoroughness. We teach it in kindness to animals, by courtesy to servants, by good manners to one another, and by truthfulness in all things. We teach it by showing the children that we, their elders, are their friends and not their enemies.'<sup>10</sup>

The characteristics of a conscientious teacher embodied in this anecdote, admirable though they may be, are not in themselves, all there is to moral education. In the first place just about any teacher could claim them for him or herself, since people tend to assess themselves positively. Secondly, there has to be a standard to determine just how

truthful, how honest, how virtuous one must be in order to be considered a person of virtue. Thirdly, the importance of professional competence of the educator is a fact that can not be overstated.

The teacher is an authority figure, and, as Professor Peters points out, he or she has to behave as becomes a person who is an authority in his or her field -- a kind of at-homeness both with his or her subject matter and its moral implications. The authority here referred to is one of professional competence, which has the effect of inspiring the students' confidence in the teacher, of enhancing the teacher's self-confidence, and of increasing the effectiveness of the teaching. The teacher's authority or professional competence serves at three levels: the personal level, by the way he or she comports him or herself; the leadership level, by how well he or she understands and relates with his or her students, and the overall impact he or she makes on their lives; and the professional level, by his or her grasp of, and approach to, the subject matter. As a person, he or she is unassuming; as a leader, available; and as a professional, knowledgeable and resourceful.

On the personal level, professional competence enables the teacher strike a balance between his or her role as mentor and that as animator. He or she avoids remarks and cross-references likely to generate ill feeling, cause division among students, disgust for the subject or dislike for the teacher. As a leader he or she becomes a bridge builder that would encourage the students to get along well with each other; to take an interest in each other; to learn each other's language; and to seek to understand and respect each other's feelings and dispositions. He or she becomes, as a result, an agent of optimism who, while inspiring the students to view events and developments positively, never tries to disguise the truth of situations. He or she inspires the students to face up to each situation as it manifests itself.

As a professional, he or she has, besides personal knowledge of the subject matter, has the ability to relate one subject to another. The moral educator has, as a professional, the skill to draw from related disciplines material that would serve in moral education. What interests the present analysis is the professionalism that enables the moral educator to draw from religious and political sources. The Nigerian moral educator should make use of some material provided by the main religious communities in the country. Such material would include their basic moral teachings<sup>11</sup>, beliefs and practices, and their implications in the larger community.

The moral educator *per se*, in some significant ways differs from the religious educator *per se*, and both differ from the political educator *per se*. While it is almost

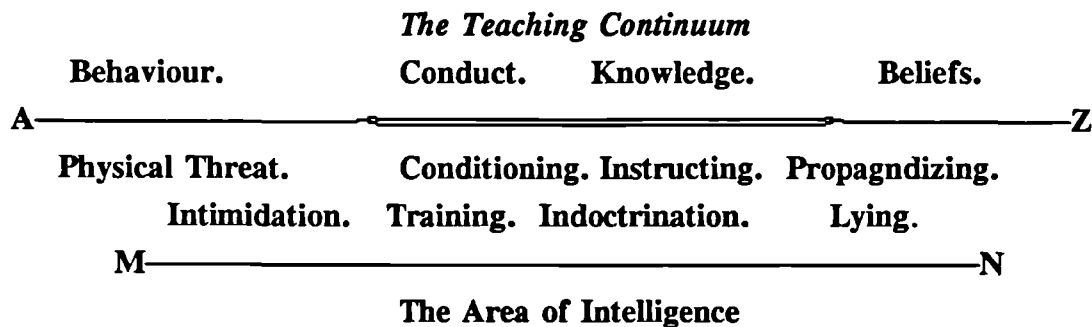


impossible to have a religious educator without reference to some religion, the opposite is the case with respect to moral education. It is even quite possible, as in humanists, to have a moral educator that rejects any direct reference to any religion. The political educator could, technically speaking could bypass both morality or religion.

What is relevant in a moral educator, even if he or she has to make use of some religious material, is not the preaching model but the teaching model. He or she does not try to persuade and convince, but to guide and enlighten. He or she appeals more to the reason than to the emotions. The preaching model is founded on the principle of handing on (transmission), whereas the teaching model proceeds by trying to unravel a structured body of knowledge and values, in such a way as to facilitate learning. The preaching model appeals to the emotions, while teaching model appeals to facts. In a public school situation the teaching model is preferable to the preaching model for, irrespective of his or her religious persuasion, he or she is better able to carry out moral education without yielding to the temptation to win people over to his or her own point of view. Nevertheless, it is impossible to ignore the "power of the podium"<sup>12</sup> for, however non-authoritarian the teacher might try to be, his or her influence still remains considerable according as the students find his or her lessons interesting. It is a natural tendency for one to seek to identify with, or assimilate, or appropriate what captures one's interest.

Teaching, as Carol Markstrom Adams notes, is a "carefully planned and structured set of conditions which enhance learning"<sup>13</sup>. Until the educator acquires this conceptualization of the nature of teaching, as well as the pedagogical skills necessary to implement it, his or her instructional activities will fall short of the level of consistency of success for which he or she strives.

T.F. Green represents this very perceptively in what he calls the teaching continuum.<sup>14</sup> He suggests that we can place various teaching modes on a continuum (AZ) with the domain of the intelligence at the centre (MN)<sup>15</sup> (See illustration below). Thus the farther from the centre, the more removed is the teaching mode from engagement of the student's practical or speculative reasoning capacity in the teaching-learning process. That practically says it all:



The area of intelligence is to be emphasized in that it removes from moral education any vestiges of brainwashing, indoctrination, or conditioning, or be construed to border on the irrational. It is an antidote against sheepish compliance in response to physical threat or coercion on the one hand, and mental conditioning or propagandizing on the other.

For an effective use of religious material in the process of moral education, the educator does not need to become a specialist theologian or social scientist or cultural anthropologist. All these disciplines have important bearings with the project of moral education since each adds a further dimension to the question by providing explanations from the doctrinal, demographical, or cultural points of view. In matters of specialization the moral educator's expertise can be compared with the practical expertise of a general physician whose competence enables him or her to be of service to his or her community without actually being a specialist in any specific branch of medicine.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, however, it seems that a too narrow specialization might have a deleterious effect on the demands of religious education.

Some of the characteristics like the witness of life and some religious commitment, required of the religious and moral educator do not apply in the case of a political educator. It is sufficient, for example, that the political educator possess a good theoretical grasp of the subject matter and the many implications surrounding them and then proceed to deliver his or her lesson for maximum results. It is a matter of common experience that the most brilliant political theorists are often not active politicians. The model political educator is not to be given to noisy quibbling or demagoguery. By the same token he or she must be moderate in his or her views -- no extremist, or revolutionary, or activist, or radical. Like the moral and religious educator, or for that matter any educator worth the name, his or her primary objective will not be to win

arguments or persuade or convince or to impose his or her own views, but to deepen the understanding of the issues.

As an educator rather than a mere theorist, he or she must have an eye on the national objectives of unity and cohesion, and work towards making them meaningful, desirable to, and achievable at the level of the students. To be able to realize this objective, he or she must manifest certain important characteristics with respect to style and overall attitudes --openness, sympathy, friendliness, moderation in the expression of personal views. He or she must have a thorough knowledge of the various aspects of Nigeria in its diversity and be able to depict a fairly accurate but interesting image of the country to the students in the course of his or her lessons.

### 3. The Students

The student's first obligation is to try to grasp as closely as possible the contents of his or her texts, their meanings and interconnections. Application, if need be, follows later. In trying to discover or establish the "perspectival character of many viewpoints, both religious, (moral) and scholarly,"<sup>17</sup> the student must employ the four "transcendental precepts" as enunciated by Bernard Lonergan to be attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible.<sup>18</sup> Thus the basic distinctions between academic and religious or moral judgments, rooted in the distinction between scholarship and faith, still obtain without necessarily obscuring each other.

They must be genuinely interested in attaining as precise a knowledge of the issues as they can and accord due respect to everyone and every legitimate institution. In addition, they must be willing to conduct their lives in an ordered way, and live accommodately with their neighbours irrespective of any differences of background or perception. In their dealings with other people, they should avoid all derogatory appeal to stereotypes on any basis whatever, whether that of State of origin, or religious affiliation or social status.<sup>19</sup>

As they grow up equipped with improved knowledge and better insight about their country, the young adults have the task and opportunity to re-evaluate previous adolescent and pre-adolescent ideals and thereby avoid distortions that might lead either to cynicism or to fanaticism. They gradually develop an inner strength that enables them to endure whatever is necessary in order to operate in full autonomy.

A good product results both from the skill of the craftsman and the quality of the material used. In moral education the skill of the educator must be able to be met with

by a corresponding responsiveness and co-operation on the part of the student. The goal of moral education which is the formation of character, and the skill for achieving it must complement each other, for none could ever be fully effective without the other. Donald Vandenberg describes the eventual result of such a co-operation on a young person:

His operative values become those of honesty, reliability, faithfulness.... He has a character and acts in the way conventional morality prescribes, but he does this authentically, ie., without being conscious of it (without undue self-consciousness), without trying to impose his values on others, without (seeking) justification, without excuse(s)...<sup>20</sup>

#### 4. The Content

A model moral education for Nigeria should have at least three components to it namely, a) moral codes which would include the traditional Nigerian moral code and modern ethical principles and theories; b) the moral aspects of religion; and c) the ethical aspects of the political life especially as envisaged in the Constitution and other national sources.

Traditional Nigerian moral code already been discussed at some length in the first three sections of Chapter Three, and a variety of ethical theories have been discussed in section 2 of Chapter Five. As has been seen in Chapter One, the setting was non-curricular for the obvious reason that the traditional Nigerian society had no organized school system in the Western and contemporary sense. The effort at this point is to try to bring the content of traditional moral code and practice into the classroom, to try and correlate them with such moral questions as that of validity, responsibility, and autonomy, dealt with in contemporary moral discourse.

As John Wilson points out<sup>21</sup>, there are certain facts about the nature of human beings which can be used as a basis for the primary rules of morality. Such facts are the sense of the holy, the sacredness of life, the preference to order rather than chaos, the sense of freedom and autonomy. These facts are self-evident to pure reason even for those who do not believe in revelation.

This is a comfort to those who have no religious affiliation. It is also quite consistent with the Kantian idea of the Moral Law which the pure practical reason provides for itself without any hindrance from, or reference to, any other object beyond itself. The

facts referred to by Professor Wilson point along the path which must be followed if we are to find 'higher generalizations' about man, which may be true universally.<sup>22</sup> This path leads towards the frontiers of the unknown -- the area once cultivated by metaphysicians -- which still shows itself in moments of deeper experience.

#### a. Traditional Moral Code

A quick glance through the traditional Nigerian moral code and through the list of *Gyara* and *Sheri'a* offences would reveal that it set out the responsibility of the individual for maintaining, or at least not disrupting, the interpersonal and social relationships. Such disruptions can occur through engaging in anti-social activities like theft, vandalism or murder. One could also be upsetting the cosmic order either by being actively engaged in, or being accessory to, such activities and occurrences as are perceived to be disruptive of the cosmic order of the universe. The various instructions provide examples of affirmative action which far outweigh the appearance of negativity in the content of the moral code. While providing direct instructions for living the good life they also provide the criteria for judging human action. The following chart provides a quick summary of the content of the traditional moral code as shown in Chapter Three:

Various Offences	Traditional Moral Code	<i>Gyara</i> Offences	<i>Sheri'a</i> Offences	Affirmative Action
Theft etc	1,7,9,14.	2,3.	2,3,7.	All of section C:a-d of Chapter 3 deals with affirmative action in promoting family and social harmony.
Vandalism	13,15,20.	---	8.	
Murder	2,5,6,15.	---	4?,6.	
Personal	3,4,10,18.	1?,4.	4,5.	
Indiscretion disrupting social harmony	21,22,23,24.	---	---	
Disrupting the cosmic order				

### **b. The Ethical Aspect of Religion\***

The ethical aspect of religion will not be just a matter of erudition with respect to religious truths. It is meant to have an impact on the lives of persons who acquire it. Its true nature therefore demands more than factual curricular learning. Ethical themes in the three major religious leanings of Nigerians -- Traditional Religion, Islam, and Christianity<sup>b</sup> -- will provide important material for moral discourse in a classroom setting.

It should cater to the diverse interests, backgrounds and abilities represented in the student population, and overcome the tension that frequently arises among the various ecclesiastical groups. Such tensions are occasioned and fuelled by negative speculations about each other. It is by providing accurate information about the real facts of each religion that the religious education programme can solve the problem of interreligious tensions.

From Traditional Religion the most overhanging ethical element is found in the principle and application of *òfó-na-ógù* (i.e. *òfó and ógù*) which is a commitment to the ideals and principles of the good life.

From Islam there are direct moral teachings in the Koran and other sources. The Ramadan fast as a practice, and almsgiving as a sign of a true believer are also ethical aspects of note. Almsgiving is not exclusive to Islam, but it is in Islam that it is institutionalized as an aspect of routine Islamic piety.

From Christianity there are the direct teachings of Jesus on brotherhood and universal love, the demand for the truth in-built in the religion itself, the law of kindness enuntiated by Jesus.

An outline of content drawing on the ethical aspect of religion will be given here. A fuller account of a scheme for integrated religious education is given in Appendix D below.

Besides the gap in the knowledge and understanding of other religions, the average Nigerian student has no more than a vague knowledge of his or her own religion. What

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- \* A programme for religious education will be dealt with more fully in Appendix D below.
  - <sup>b</sup> This listing is according to the chronological order of their influence in Nigeria and not necessarily according to the order of importance.

little knowledge he or she possesses usually consists in some vague loyalty to some ecclesiastical group, a number of learned prejudices chiefly against other communions, a few quaint moral taboos, no more than infantile notions about God, and a few devotional techniques. The religious education programme should fill up the gaps in knowledge both of the student's own religion and those of others around him or her. Such knowledge will clear the webs of misunderstanding and speculation and pave the way for understanding and mutual co-operation.

#### **b<sub>1</sub>. From Traditional Religion**

##### ***Ofó-na-ógù: Principle and Application***

From Traditional Religion, there are such themes as *òfó-na-ógù*, which form the back-bone of morality in traditional Nigerian society. Through it a member of the community X-rays his life in the light of the moral principles operative in the society and identifies with the side of goodness while denouncing the side of evil.

The *Ofó* is a short stick, a kind of staff. *Ofó* is made from the branch of the *òfó* tree *Detarium elastica*<sup>23</sup> and becomes effective after consecration. Among the Igbos every family head and any other elder who has the *ozo* title must also possess an *òfó* for it is the symbol of ritual,<sup>24</sup> political,<sup>25</sup> and religious authority<sup>26</sup>. It symbolizes the truthfulness and righteousness expected to proceed out of the mouths of judges, priests and kings. Modupe Odudoye correlates the *òfó* with the rod of office reflected by the Hebrew term *mat-teh* 'oz of Ezekiel 19:14b; and with the Yoruba *tè* which means to press or lean on; *te òkpá* which means to lean on a stand; and 'oz which means strong he regards as cognate with the Igbo *ozo*, the highest civic title among the Igbo.<sup>27</sup> It is then regarded as the abode of a spirit, especially of the ancestral spirits. *Ofó* sticks are consecrated and handed down from generation to generation.

The concept and symbolism of *òfó* cuts across a wide cross-section of Nigeria and beyond. The Igbo word *òfó* has cognate in the Urhobo *opho*, a 'covenant'; the Yoruba *òfò*, an 'incantation'; from the Oyo Yoruba verb *fò*, 'to utter'; (or from the Ijebu Yoruba *fò*, 'to say'); the Ikale *òfò*; the Itsekiri *òfò* 'word, matter'. When the *òfó*-holder, that is, the '*òfó*-holder', places his *òfó* on the ground, he is seeking guidance and direction. The solemn utterances he makes, the ideals and principles of the good life he invokes are called *ógù*, the act of invocation itself being referred to as *ìjù-ógù*.

A devout *òfó*-holder says his daily prayers by *ìjù-ógù* with his *òfó* held to the ground, and seals every affirmation by striking the ground with it. What the *òfó*-holder says

striking the lineage *òfó* on the ground is always a solemn declaration and not a personal opinion. As Victor Uchendu notes, what is declared upon the *òfó* becomes a decision of the family uttered through the *òjòòfó* -- a law binding on all the family members:

Once a decision has been thus acclaimed into law, it is given a "ritual binder" by the *òfó* holders, who invoke this formula: "This *ìwú* [law] is in accordance with our custom and must be obeyed and respected. Those who refuse to obey the law, may *òfó* kill them." Each time the *òfó* is struck on the ground (usually four times), the assembly assents with *ìháà* ("Let it be so.")<sup>28</sup>

*Ofó* and *ógù* are so closely bound together that you could hardly talk of one without the other. Their overhanging principle and point of reference is the traditional moral code. There are in addition traditional values which, while not being religious as such, are very central in any meaningful social, moral and religious discourse in Africa. Central among the values is the great premium on the primacy of life over every other thing:

1. That life is the greatest and most important thing in the whole world.<sup>29</sup>
2. That human life, notwithstanding the idiosyncrasies that characterize every individual existence, is sacred and of inestimable worth.
3. That the individual is inextricably bound with the community, and the good or happiness or misery of the individual is a function of the good or happiness or misery of the community and vice versa.
4. That, as a consequence, everyone owes everyone else solidarity, support and concern in matters related to his or her welfare.
5. That in paying this debt of solidarity and concern for others, the way of understanding, openness, honesty and tolerance is the best of all.

The prayer life of a practitioner of Traditional Religion often involves a mirroring of one's conduct against the traditional moral code or *òménàlà*. It is referred to as *ìjù-ógù*, which in content is the declaration of his stand for life in all its worth, for uprightness of life; and his deprecation of wickedness. Anyone who sets himself against the life of another should be deserving of the curses uttered.



In practice, a member of the Traditional society would make his daily examination of conscience by the process of *tjù-ógù*. In a community setting, the *òjòdòfós* or *òfó*-holders (always male)<sup>30</sup>, perform the *tjù-ógù* on behalf of the community as lists of *desiderata* of personal, inter-personal and communal uprightness are enunciated and their opposites denounced by sharply striking their *òfós* on the ground as each strophe is mentioned. Izu Onyeocha captures a scene of *tjù-ógù* in his play, *A Title of Honour*, where Ogbuka, the hero of the play, pours out his heart on waking up suddenly from a troubled sleep:

*Ogbuka: (Sneezing violently) Aaaatsssh! Aaatsssh!! Puah!... Puah!... What a day! That I would begin a new day shadowed by evil men. Whoever they are, my hands are clean...*

Life to everyone, and death to no one, great or small, male or female, old or young, rich or poor. Whoever denies life to another, may death and disaster overtake him.

May the rivers stay on, and the fish as well. May the rivers never dry up so the fish won't perish. A perk for the kite, a perk for the eagle, and if anyone of them blocks the other's right to perch may his wings break off. The good will meet with goodness, and the evil will meet with doom.

Peace and prosperity to all who strive, safety to all who travel, progeny to all who crave them, and whoever wants to frustrate others' good aspirations, may his hands be pierced by thorns.

Whoever is (unjustly) angry on seeing me, may his anger be prolonged for ever. Whoever wants to see me dead, may I live to attend his funeral. Whoever remembers his dead only upon seeing me, may his dead be his company. The one to trip and fall is the chaser after new-hatched chicken, the young chicken will scamper to safety.

If hunters learn to shoot without missing, the swallow flies without perching. Wherever I perceive that my life is threatened I never walk, but run. If death goes for the young, I will identify with the old, and if it goes for the old, I will identify with the young.

Whoever overpowers a child in order to rob him could never rob him of the ability to cry. The oppressor of orphans, the despoiler of widows, must never lie peacefully in his grave.

I killed no one, I harmed no one, I robbed no one of his property. What I am not guilty of, may it never haunt me. When one is innocent of any wrong-doing, could he be made to pay a penalty?<sup>31</sup>

## b<sub>2</sub>. From Islam

Discussing the moral teachings of Islam about the good life well will reveal the fact that moral goodness begins with belief in God, but must be made manifest through a series of commitments and the practice of certain social virtues. An interesting question to ask is perhaps if Islamic ethic is disinterested or whether it stands on utilitarian principles.

### i. Moral Teachings

The Koran ii.172, gives a description of the righteous person as

one who believes in God, and the last day, and the angels, and the Book, and the prophets; and who gives wealth for the love of God to kindred, and orphans, and the poor, and the wayfarer, and the beggars, and those in captivity, and who is steadfast in prayer, and gives alms; and those who are sure of their covenant when they make a covenant; and the patient in poverty, and in distress, and in time of violence.

Among the Druse Muslims, there are recognized seven great duties which form the reference points for determining the morality and piety or otherwise of a believer's action. These include: 1) Truth in speech (towards one another only)<sup>c</sup>; 2) mutual protection; 3) rejection of all other religions; 4) separation from all who are in error; 5) belief in the unity of God; 6) resignation to His will; and 7) obedience to his commands.

As regards general moral duties, the Koran is explicit. Parents are to be kindly treated, especially in old age, spoken to respectfully, deferred to humbly. Only if they desire to draw their children away to idolatry, they must not be obeyed. A murderer

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<sup>c</sup> It is a common trait in Islam that non-Muslims do not enjoy the same statutory rights as Muslims. In Chapter One, Alhaji Abubakar Gumi's categorical statement about Muslims not accepting a Christian ruler is a case in point, (See his statement quoted in the section 10 of Chapter One on **Nigeria's Present Predicament**). In this instance non-Muslims are not even entitled to know the truth, and any untruth told them has no negative moral consequences. When viewed with close attention, the seven great duties can be seen as the justificatory background to most of the attitudes — sometimes hostile — some Islamic sects adopt towards people of other religions. This can present a problem in a pluralist society, especially if the Muslims insist on an inflexible interpretation of the duties.

is accounted worthy of hell: "Whosoever *slayeth a believer*<sup>4</sup> purposely, his reward is hell." "It is incumbent on you to exercise vengeance for murder. ii.173.

With regard to theft, when property is taken out of proper custody in a secret manner, is punishable by the amputation of a hand, according to v.42: "If a man or woman steal, cut off their hands."

As to offenses against chastity, the Koran is severe; immoral persons whose guilt is proved are to receive a hundred stripes; guilty persons, if married, were at first shut up in their houses (iv.19); later they were stoned to death.

Practically unlimited right of concubinage was permitted, both by Mohammed's example and by Koranic precept, especially if the women involved were seized in military campaigns. Thus, "Unlawful to you are married women, except such as your right hand possesses," i.e. those taken in war, or slaves (iv.28); but free Muslim women might not be taken as concubines.

On marriage, while not allowing to men generally the same license as to the Prophet himself, the Koran permits marriage with up to four wives (iv.27). Marriage with a grown-up woman must be subject to her positive consent, and silence is considered as consent.

## ii. The Ramadan Fast

The Ramadan fast, which occurs in the ninth month of the Islamic year, is expressly enjoined in ii.179-184. The fast is prescribed "that ye may fear God for certain days." Those who are ill or on a journey are excused, but they must fast the same number of other days. The fast is to be kept by day only; and eating and drinking are allowed after dark until the earliest dawn. The first observation of the new moon of the month is to be the beginning of the fast.

## iii. Almsgiving

The duty of almsgiving is often enjoined in the Koran. *Zakat*, or the legal alms, literally purification, expresses a portion of property given as a sanctification of the rest. It is paid separately upon different kinds of property that have been at least one year in possession of an adult; but not upon the necessities of life, slaves employed in service, books, craftsmen's tools, etc.

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<sup>4</sup> The corollary is that to slay a non-[Islamic] believer is not quite as grievous and does not carry with it the same consequences.

### **b<sub>3</sub>. From Christianity**

A great deal of 'Christian' moral discourse whether in theology or in any other field is based directly or indirectly on the biblical teachings or reflections on it. The Old Testament provided the Decalogue upon which most moral judgment among Christians is based. In the New Testament, Jesus said he came not to destroy but to fulfill the (moral) laws of the Old Testament. He gave a 'new commandment' of love; preached mercy and forgiveness; challenged the people to 'learn from' his meekness and humility, and said he was 'the way, the truth and the life'. Christian moral teaching is three-dimensional by involving at the same time precepts of inspired injunctions from the Old Testament, teachings initiated by Christ, and the good examples that his life achieved.

#### **i. Common Brotherhood and Universal Love**

Jesus taught the common brotherhood of all humankind (St Matthew 23:8). This brotherhood consists not merely in the mutual attachment sometimes seen between brothers in ancient society, not the loving affection of a David and a Jonathan, (cf. I Samuel 19:1-7), and all such which could be inspired by mutual appreciation of good qualities, clannish regard by community of kindred, associations, habits, interests. Rather, Jesus showed an unheard-of love to those most unlike him -- the publicans and sinners like Zacchaeus, (St Luke 19:2-10); the woman taken in adultery, (St John 8:4,5); the woman who was a sinner, (St Luke 7:36-50); the thief at the crucifixion, (St Luke 23:39-43).

Jesus' Sermon on the Mount emphasizes a completely new order of relationships where poverty of spirit, meekness, mercy, peacefulness, singleness of heart, and uprightness are exalted above their opposites (St Matthew Chapters 5-7; St Luke Chapter 6). And St Paul's first Letter to the Corinthians is an ode on love as patient, kind, unselfish, outgoing, and interested in the truth (I Cor 13).

#### **ii. The Demand for the Truth**

Christ placed great emphasis on the truth and urged his followers, "If you continue in my word, then you are my disciples indeed; you shall come to know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (St John 8:31,32). He carried the domain of truth into the most inward thought, everywhere where the world cannot follow us by insisting that "there is nothing hidden that shall not be manifested," (St Mark 4:22). It is akin to what the psalmist wrote in Psalm 51: "Indeed you love truth in the heart, then in the secret

of my heart teach me wisdom." An important lesson from the demand for the truth is that no criticism by reasonable methods, with a pure desire to attain truth, is to be discountenanced by a true follower of Christ.

### **iii. The Law of Kindness**

Christ discountenanced revenge (St Matthew 5:38-41), and substituted a supreme law of kindness. Fellow humans are to be treated as a loving Father would treat his loved and erring children (cf. the Parable of the Prodigal Son, St Luke 15:11-31); our neighbour is whoever is in need of our help, and whom we can really help (St Matthew 25:34-40); we should love our enemies and do good to them that hate us (St Luke 6:27-35); we should treat others the way in which we would like others to treat us (St Matthew 7:12). These precepts, as recorded, were given broadly by Jesus, without a full analysis of circumstances and instances, that being left to the individual to work out as circumstances arise.

### **c. From the Political Life**

What interests moral education is the ethics of the political life whereby the government is charged with the responsibility to run an honest and effective government; to uphold the ideals for which the country stands; and to protect those rights which the constitution guarantees to citizens. On the part of individual citizens, it is the responsibility to perform all the duties placed on them by the fact of their citizenship of the country and respect the rights of everyone as guaranteed by the constitutions of the land.

The fundamental rights of individual persons are defined in Chapter IV of the Constitution to include, the right to life, which provides that no one may be deprived intentionally of his or her life except in the execution of the sentence of a court in respect to a criminal offence; the right to the dignity of the human person, which prohibits the subjection of anyone to torture, slavery, forced labour; the right to personal liberty whereby no one may be deprived of such liberty save in the execution of a court order. Other rights guaranteed by the constitution include the right to a fair hearing in matters relating to the determination of one's rights or obligations whether by government or any other authority; the right to private and family life, freedom of thought, conscience and religion; freedom of expression and the press; peaceful assembly and association; freedom of movement; and freedom from discrimination.

The first duty imposed on the government by the constitution is the duty "to conform to, observe and apply the provisions of (Chapter II) of the constitution" (Chapter II.13), which reminds the government to bear in mind that:

- a) sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria from whom the government derives its power and authority;
- b) the security and welfare of the people is the primary purpose of government;
- c) the participation by the people in their government shall be in accordance with the constitutions.

The Constitution outlines the personal and individual rights of citizens and provides that the economy be run "in such a manner as to secure the maximum welfare, freedom and happiness of every citizen on the basis of social justice and equality of status and opportunity" (16.1a). With a social order founded on the declared ideals of Freedom, Equality and Justice (17.1), the constitution guarantees to every citizen equality of rights, freedoms and opportunities before the law; declares the independence, impartiality and integrity of the courts of law and easy accessibility to them; acknowledges the sanctity of the human person; and enjoins the government to be humane in its actions (II.3a-g). Article 18 provides for equality of educational opportunities which include a) free, compulsory and universal primary education; b) free secondary education; c) free university education; and d) free adult literacy programme.

The government is to ensure that all citizens have the opportunity to secure adequate means of livelihood. With regard to the work place, the constitution provides that the conditions of work should be "just and humane, with facilities for leisure and for social, religious and cultural life"; and that health, safety and welfare of all persons in employment be safeguarded. It also insists that equal pay should be received for equal work such that no one is discriminated against on the basis of sex or any other ground. Finally, children, young persons and the aged are protected against moral and material neglect.

## 5. Methods

In considering the methods of moral education it is important to take into account the fact that the various ages of the students make certain methods more effective than

others. This point is further developed in sections b and c below. But before then it is important to set down principles that must be borne in mind in any programme of moral education. These include the avoidance of negative approaches of brainwashing, propaganda and conditioning; the adoption of positive constructive methods of description and analysis which are applicable in other fields of education; and the application of elements of traditional Nigerian methods that have proved effective in the traditional setup.

#### **a. Eschewing Negative Approaches**

Moral education should not be associated with such negative practices as brainwashing, and propagandizing but with a variety of methods including plain teaching in the academic sense, and the use of stories. While plain academic teaching will produce intellectuals who may or may not necessarily emerge as moral, brainwashing will produce clones incapable of independent and autonomous judgment of the real issues, and propaganda, which is by definition an unfair invasion of the mind aimed at distracting or dissipating the recipient's independent judgment, is likely to produce a morally timid and unbalanced character.

Propagandizing is a way of exaggeration, a prevarication with respect to certain facts a distorted form of which is meant to serve the secret interests of the propagandist. It can produce compliance, but such compliance will not be based on genuine, autonomous understanding.

Conditioning can result from physical, psychological or emotional constraint and produces compliance without rational decision on the part of the one conditioned. It produces compliance out of fear and without any choice. As Rousseau points out,<sup>32</sup> to yield to a strong man is an act of necessity, not of will. At most it is a result of the dictate of prudence.

The goal of moral education is not simply to ensure that people act in some pre-determined way. It is the internalization of moral principles and a commitment to moral values. Through it one comes to link one's personal values with some kind of intrinsic reward which is more satisfying than any other.

In plain teaching appeal is made to the intellect, the reason and the desire or need to know, and the emotions play but a secondary role. In propaganda the emotions are invoked above all else. It plays on such emotions as fear, anger, pride, the sense of shame, sense of self-respect, nationalism. Lindley Fraser reflecting on the nature of propaganda suggests that all human instincts have at one time or another provided prop-

agandists with a means of influencing or trying to influence the behaviour of their targets.<sup>33</sup>

Brainwashing is a method often employed for getting the mind to accept certain bodies of propositions that serve the interest of some political or ideological cause, irrespective of whether or not the subject or victim, if left to choose, would have identified with them.

In religious circles brainwashing is a very important factor in most induced conversions, but there is no conclusive evidence that all religious conversions result from brainwashing. Some critics of religion have the favourite pastime of considering the methods of religious proselytism as equivalent to brainwashing. It is a rather sweeping kind of criticism, since it presupposes that one who is converted to some religion has absolutely no judgmental input, and no personal conviction, but simply irrationally drifts in without understanding. Such critics will have a hard time explaining the factors at work in brainwashers themselves or the purpose of brainwashing in the first place.

In politics it is frequently used by tyrants to compel compliance in situations that would otherwise have been met with nothing but objection and opposition. Most regimes that apply it are usually doubtful of their own legitimacy and would hang on to power by crushing the spirit of the citizens. Thus in China the fear of continued civil war or foreign intervention convinced the communist leaders that they had to use shock tactics to convert the masses.

The fear of brainwashing arises from its effect of totally subduing the human mind and conditioning it to respond to external stimuli in a way already envisaged by the operator as though the human being were a machine. The Russian physiologist and Nobel laureate Ivan Petrovich Pavlov (1849-1936) discovered that a dog could be conditioned to hate what he previously loved, and love what he previously hated. This is the basis of brain-washing: that by appropriate conditioning, it was believed, a human being could be turned into whatever the psychologist desired.<sup>34</sup> Those who apply such methods describe them euphemistically as a process of re-education.

Propagandizing is often closely associated with brainwashing. As Cora Marie Dubitsky rightly points out<sup>35</sup> propaganda's dark spot is not for the fact that it is frequently associated with lies and the distortion of the truth. Rather it is the omission of the truth in order to avoid its challenges. Its appeal lies in the fact that it saves time.

Genuine education, which by definition is associated with leading, guiding, bringing forth, rearing, and nurturing, should not be associated with brainwashing and propaganda. It should not have anything to do with propaganda and brainwashing, which



invade and ultimately prey upon their target's personal autonomy. The educator must apply the same rigorous methods and tools applied in formal education -- the method of exposition, critical analysis, and practical application. The initial stage of the programme should consist of an excursus through the various political, ethical and religious systems the students are meant to study. At the second stage of critical analysis they will be able to ask the right types of questions about validity and relevance of specific aspects in certain systems. The final stage of practical application will enable them to pick and choose intelligently what is appropriate from what is merely possible. The capacity for discriminating choice among political, ethical and religious systems is the crucial difference between a well-informed, balanced personality and a mere ideological guinea pig who is a mere product of indoctrination and brainwashing. On this capacity lies the true moral basis for patriotism in contrast with mere sanguine activism, character in contrast with conditioned response, and faith in contrast with neurosis.

#### **b. Using Descriptive-Analytic Approaches**

Because of the variety of sources which may not be easy for all the students to digest, an initial phase would comprise in an exposée of each source material as it comes without raising difficult questions of textual or conceptual analysis. It is a stage of understanding and exploration where discussion is of paramount importance. From the contributions of discussants students are able to fill up little gaps of details and make their understanding more comprehensive. A transition will then be made to the more challenging aspect of matching one principle against another, one concept against another. The nature and pace of such a transition will depend on the age of the students and their level of intellectual development, the importance of the subject matter with regard to the felt needs of the moment, and how successfully the students went through the earlier stage, for it does not make sense to proceed to a higher level without first consolidating the foundation.

#### **c. Applying a Special Nigerian Touch**

The extensive use of stories, illustrations, proverbs, riddles and other brain-teasers and symbolic actions gave traditional moral education such effectiveness as to commend them for adaptation in a classroom context. The use of the interactive method ensured the maximum participation among those present, with each participant (i.e. student) having something to contribute towards the learning process. It is clearly preferable to

the tendency, even in contemporary situations to make rules, to enuntiate isolated ethical theories, or to seek to project a particular point of view as a model for all.

The use of fictional characters is another effective device which ensures that (the moral) issues rather than persons are the points of focus. Thus in Nigerian folklore Tortoise illustrates wisdom, Lion courage, Billy Goat craftiness and Sheep foolishness. It is thus sufficient to tell a short story depicting any of the animals in activities that depict the characteristic being manifested at the moment. For example, when someone has been the careless cause of something whose unpleasant consequences he or she is suffering, the usual mode of rebuke would be something like: "Sheep wet her sleeping-place and had to stand all night."

In Western literature the giants and dwarfs of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, the animal characters of Orwell's *Animal Farm* and the Pilgrim of John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* are fictional characters meant to depict human tendencies and their attendant moral and other consequences.

Professor Donatus Nwoga recounts the highly significant symbolic actions of masquerades in a certain festival:

Among the masquerade gallery during the *Uzo iyi* festival of 1973, there was a set of ugly masquerades called *Ntoromafo* or "pot-belly".

They came from two or three sections of the town and they appeared to be in competition to decide which one would be the most outrageously ugly. The mask face was most significantly indicative of a leprous, eaten-up face with the nose lost, the mouth largely rotten, the gawkily-formed, exposed teeth half-destroyed; the tongue lolling out.

In the middle of the figure was a grossly distended stomach below which were hanging, outside the clothes, pendulous oversized genitals. Each was a really horrible figure that spoke through its nose, unashamedly trying to court the prettiest girls that came to watch the festival. Ultimately, it turned out that the mask had a historical background, being a representation of somebody who had contracted decay through sexual excess. More significantly, however, the masquerade was presented as a periodic reification of the concept of punishment for excess.<sup>36</sup>

#### **d. Counselling: A Necessary Companion To Moral Education**

Counselling provides an important supplement to both religious and moral education. The student's religious and moral needs are not always entirely met in the

classroom either because of his or her unique circumstance, or the way in which the material is treated. Counselling shows the student how certain religious or moral principles can be applied in his or her own specific circumstances. A counselling session provides the student with additional personal help in clearing confusions, in dealing with some intimate questions that overlap between morality and religion -- questions about sexuality, guilt, personal habits, and doubts that would be either embarrassing or self deprecating to discuss in public. A state of confusion or guilt, a feeling of being persecuted or misunderstood, can have a devastating effect on a student. Through counselling, the student becomes better informed and better equipped.

There are also personal emotional problems that require difficult moral decisions -- abortion, divorce, serious illness, failure, personal or family tragedy. Counselling enables the student give his or her own side of the story especially where he or she feels he or she is not being fairly treated. In a given case affecting the student or others, the counsellor has the opportunity to expand the larger implications, which the student was unaware of at the moment of action, and to advise him or her on how to handle the situation.

## 6. The Basis of Integrated Religious Education

Before establishing the course content for an integrated religious education in Nigeria, some important points need to be made about the teacher and some extra features of the course with respect to the educator, the one being educated, and the course content. There are some marked differences between the religious educator *per se* and the moral educator *per se*. While a moral educator need not hold any religious belief in order to have credibility, it my contention that religious belief is essential in a religious educator. It is also my contention that religious education must be complemented with religious praxis or risk being superficial. The course content will consist in items of belief and practice found in the various religions, especially those which have an impact outside the given religion. (See section 3 below).

## **7. The Religious Educator**

The religious educator need not necessarily be a highly specialized professional theologian, social scientist or cultural anthropologist. All these disciplines have important bearings in the scheme of religious education since each adds a further dimension to the question by providing explanations from the doctrinal, demographical, or cultural points of view. In matters of specialization the religious educator's expertise is comparable with the practical expertise of a general physician whose competence enables him or her to be of service to his or her community without actually being a specialist in any specific branch of medicine.<sup>37</sup> On the other hand, however, it seems that a too narrow specialization might have a deleterious effect on the demands of religious education. As Cora Marie Dubitsky forcefully points out, being immersed in the intricacies of the theological (and other) specialties without first developing a solid foundation in the faith on the first (non-speculative) level can have a deleterious effect on religious education: "We can acquire in theology a very great skill in talking and perhaps not have really understood from the depths of existence what we are really talking about."<sup>38</sup> It is quite possible that the professional religious educator can be adept at quoting the proper authorities and still be unable to articulate personal convictions.

## **8. Religious Education and Praxis**

It seems indispensable that in addition to academic and professional qualification, the religious educator should possess a solid religious commitment. It seems hardly possible to teach anything, religion included, without coming from a particular bias, whether it is expressed or admitted or not. Besides, not embracing a position is, in fact, taking a position.<sup>39</sup> When we study religion comparatively we advocate a kind of religious

pluralism in which multiple truths stand side by side without force or impact on life. Religion cannot be done justice to by adopting a value-free approach which has the effect of making a faith decision irrelevant. But where the religious educator has some religious commitment the religious perspective which he or she gives would be natural rather than artificial, and his or her credibility is easier to establish. The best science teacher does not merely unleash a string of scientific facts but is able to bring them to life through practical laboratory experiments. The same analogy would apply in the case of religious education, where best educator should not simply unleash a barrage of religious facts, but should be able to correlate all the facts without getting too narrowly involved in his or her own religious viewpoints.

As already noted earlier, in traditional Nigerian society, children were not excluded from religious ceremonies. They had the opportunity to watch and even take some limited part in the preparation of sacrifices. They could stand at the fringe to listen to the prayers and invocations and afterwards seek to re-enact what they had seen and heard as exactly as they could. They became little priests, little fortune-tellers, little worshippers. For that reason, religious education must also ensure that while the students are being furnished with facts about religion, access to religious practice should not be denied them. This access can be provided either separately according to the various religious persuasions, or all together ecumenically. The one has the advantage of providing an intensity of religious experience among homogenous believers, while the other has the advantage of creating opportunity for mutual contact. Whether the one or the other, there should be opportunity for both, at least periodically.

Things learnt in class are enhanced with practice. One cannot, for example, conceive of physical education without physical exercise (workouts), nor moral education without morality. Religious education without religion or religious practice is rather incomplete. The religious educator must also be mindful of the increasingly secular environment of

the public schools both professing his or her own religion and in designing a programme of religious education. It is in this ability to detach him or herself that professional skill and competence comes in. Therefore, in principle no attempt should be made at imposing any religious beliefs and practices on students. By the same token no attempt should be made at suppressing the religious beliefs and/or practices of students where they already exist. They should have the opportunity to practise their religion unhindered. To positively prohibit religious practices is as much an infraction of the basic rights of religious believers as to promote some religious belief is to a non-believer. It is tantamount to an antireligious campaign and a violation of the freedom of conscience and of expression.

## Notes

1. Etzioni, A., "The Organizational Structure of 'Closed' Educational Institutions", Harvard Educational Review, vol 27, 1957, referred to in N.A. Nwagwu's "A review of Nigerian Educational Policy Research", Current Trends in Nigerian Educational Research, Prepared by Nigerian Educational Research Council, 22-24 May, 1985, Conference Centre, University of Ibadan, p.34.
2. Jensen, G.E., "The School As A Social System", Educational Research Bulletin, vol 33 1954.
3. Wilson, John and Rankin, John, 'An "Approach" to Religious Education and A Reply', Moral Education, Vol 2 No 1, March 1970, p.41.
4. See Peters, R.S., Education As Initiation, London: George G. Harrap & Company Ltd, 1964.
5. Loukes, Harold, "What Sort of Teachers are Needed?", Moral Education, Vol 1, No 3, December 1969, pp.27-31.
6. *ibid.*
7. *ibid.*
8. *ibid.*
9. *ibid.* Emphasis was supplied.
10. Jacks, L.P., A Living Universe, pp.50, 51; Smith, The Golden Stool, London: Edinburgh House Press, 1927, p.311.
11. Several efforts have been made in Nigeria to produce a formula or schema for moral education and religious education. So far none of the proposals have been acceptable to all. The usual objection is that some aspect or other of the belief or practices of some segment of the population has been compromised in the scheme. The proposal presented here is meant to present the central themes without compromising any.
12. Cohn, Robert L., "Professing Religion in the Classroom," Religion and Intellectual Life, Fall 1989 vol VII no. 1 p.103.
13. Markstrom Adams, Carol, "Religious Minority and Adolescents", Religious Education, Vol 84, no.3, Summer 1989, p.427.
14. Green, T.F., "Topology of the Teaching Concept" in Concepts of Teaching: Philosophical Essays, Ed., C.J. Macmillan and T.W. Nelson, Chicago: Rand McNally, 1968, p.87.
15. The labels (AZ) representing extremities, and (MN) representing the mean or area of intelligence, were added here for the purpose of clarity. They were not in Green's original designation.

16. The analogy between the religious educator and a general physician was used by Cora Marie Dubitsky in her article "Religious Education: Profession and Academic Discipline" in Religious Education, Vol 84 no 2, Spring 1989 p.281. Her approach was, however, slightly different.
17. Carmody, Denise Larden, "Professing Religion in the Classroom", *ibid.* p.105.
18. *ibid.*
19. Happily, gender stereotypes do not seem to present any great obstacles, since those who qualify for positions do not seem to be held back on the basis of their gender. There are, however, some areas -- notably the Islamic areas -- where religion has definite provisions for the genders, but this is not universal in Nigeria.
20. Vandenberg, Donald, Being and Education, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1971,p.53. (The parenthetical remarks were added by me).
21. See Bender, Louis, *op. cit.* p.34.
22. See Peters, R.S., *op. cit.* p.232.
23. See Odudoye, Modupe, "Potent Speech", Traditional Religion in West Africa, Edited by E.A. Ade Adegboke, Ibadan: Daystar Press, 1983, pp.203-207.
24. Uchendu, Victor, The Igbo of Southeast Nigeria, New York, Chicago: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1985, p.90.
25. Nzimiro, Ikenna, Studies in Ibo Political Systems, London: Frank Cass, 1972, p.116.
26. Ilogu, Edmund, Christianity and Ibo Culture, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986.
27. Odudoye, Modupe, *op. cit.* p.203.
28. Uchendu, Victor, *op. cit.* p.42. The Igbo *ìhaà* has the equivalent in other Nigerian languages: *isé* in Edo, *A se/Ase* in Yoruba. The Igbo *ìwú* (law) is Yoruba *ìwé* (inscription, letter, book).
29. There is clearly an emphasis on "this world" rather than "the other world". This is not without its consequences on the Christian or Islamic interpretation of life since both religions are strong believers in a world to come.
30. Everyone -- man, woman or child -- is entitled to the activity of *ìjù-ógù* as a personal declaration of innocence. A woman, for example, would add to her *ìjù-ógù* characteristically female areas of life like, 'I have not killed a child in the womb, nor stolen any woman's cocoyams or cassava...'
31. Onyeocha, Izu M., A Title of Honour, A play produced for the National Television Authority (NTA Channel 8), Enugu, 1984, p.1. In real life most *ìjù-ógù* follows a similar pattern but not necessarily the same words.



32. Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, Of the Social Contract, Chapter III; See Social Contract: Locke, Hume, Rousseau, edited with an Introduction by Sir Ernest Barker, London, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1985, pp.172-173. Consider this telling passage: "Obey the Powers that be. If that means Yield to Force, the precept is *admirable but redundant*. My reply to those who advance it is that *no case will ever be found of its violation*."
33. Fraser, L., Propaganda, London: Oxford University Press, 1957, pp.7,10.
34. See Sargent, W., The Battle For the Mind, New York: Pan Books, 1959, p.46.
35. Dubitsky, Cora Marie, "Religious Education: Profession and Academic Discipline" in Religious Education, Vol 84 no 2, Spring 1989 p.279.
36. Nwoga, Donatus I., Nka Na Nzere (The Focus of Igbo World View), 1984 Ahiajoku Lecture, Owerri: The Government Printer, 1984, pp.39-40.
37. The analogy between the religious educator and a general physician was used by Cora Marie Dubitsky in her article "Religious Education: Profession and Academic Discipline" in Religious Education, Vol 84 no 2, Spring 1989 p.281. Her approach was, however, slightly different.
38. Dubitsky, Coral Marie, op. cit. p.281
39. *ibid.*

## Appendix A: Nigerian National Anthem I (1960-1977)

Nigeria, we hail thee,  
our own dear native land  
Though tribe and tongue may differ  
In brotherhood we stand,  
Nigerians all, and proud to serve  
our sovereign Motherland.

Our flag shall be a symbol,  
that truth and justice reign.  
In peace or battle honoured  
And this we count as gain;  
To hand unto our children  
A banner without stain.

O God of all creation,  
Grant this our one request:  
Help us to build a nation  
where no man is oppressed  
And so with peace and plenty  
Nigeria may be blest.

## **Appendix B: Nigerian National Anthem (Current)**

Arise, O compatriots, Nigeria's call obey!  
To serve our fatherland  
With love and strength and faith.  
The labour of our heroes past  
shall never be in vain.  
To serve with heart and might  
One nation bound in freedom, peace and unity.

Oh God of creation, direct our noble cause,  
Guide all our leaders right  
Help our youth the truth to know.  
In love and honesty to grow  
And living just and true,  
Great, lofty heights attain  
To build a nation where peace and justice shall reign.

## **Appendix C: The National Pledge**

I pledge to Nigeria, my country,  
To be faithful, loyal and honest.  
To serve Nigeria with all my strength,  
To defend her unity  
And uphold her integrity.  
So, help me God.

## Appendix D: Content of An Integrated Religious Education for Nigeria

The content of an integrated religious education will consist in the basic beliefs, teachings and practices of Traditional Religion, Islam and Christianity, since they are often cited by the various adherents as the reason behind some of their actions even in non-religious circumstances. The common factors will then be sought and correlated to each other.

### 1. Traditional Religion

#### a. The Basic Beliefs

The traditional belief system has been put together by Chief K.O.K. Onyioha under the auspices of the Godian Religion which is none other than Traditional Religion being rediscovered and of which he is the chief protagonist. The membership of the Godian Religion have set out a basic creed which summarizes their system of belief.<sup>1</sup>

#### i. The Godian Creed

1. I believe in the Almighty God, Creator of Heaven and Earth, as my source of inspiration, strength and as my protector.
2. I believe in the universal brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of one God; love your neighbour as you love yourself; do unto others as you would want others do unto you; thou shall not kill; thou shall not steal; thou shall not commit adultery; thou shall not lie; and in respect and obedience to elders, just laws, and in retributive justice.
3. I believe that every human being, consciously or unconsciously, looks up to something him as his source of inspiration, and that "something" is the Almighty God.
4. I believe that the Almighty God made the world a paradise of happiness for humanity but that man has made the world a hell for himself by too much quarrels with his fellow man over methods of God-worship.
5. I believe the Kingdom of Heaven on earth shall come when man learns to quarrel no more with his fellow man on the excuse of difference in methods of God-worship.
6. I believe that religious concepts are inspired by man's desire to offer thanks to God for His goodness to humanity.
7. I believe that every human being has his own way organized or unorganized, systematized or unsystematized, of expressing the necessary gratitude to God and that in this fact every human being satisfies the purpose of religion or God-worship.
8. I believe that there is no sense in quarrelling with my fellow man over his religious doctrine, belief or methods of God-worship that differ from my own manner of satisfying the common purpose of thanksgiving to the Almighty.

9. I believe that to base association of man with man, nation with nation, on the ground of common religion and faith, is sheer folly.
10. I believe that every man should have the right to worship God in the way he understands best, without bitterness.
11. I believe that any attempt to force man directly or indirectly to accept any particular faith, religious doctrine or method of God-worship rumples social harmony.
12. I believe that organized religious bodies as they are known in the world today, though the fundamental principles underlying their purposes are good, have, by each in its way canvassing to have all men embrace its doctrines, aroused unhealthy competition and mutual jealousy among themselves and blown the world into a tumultuous asylum of warring religious factions.
13. I believe that if the universal brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God shall be a reality, if the Kingdom of God shall come, the traditional African attitude of live and let live in all matters of religion is the indispensable catalyst.
14. I believe that deification of man has given source to the formation of the many religious organizations now competing and quarrelling with one another, each in frantic attempts to get everybody to accept and hallow the man it has deified as the only son, holy prophet, and only medium through whom God's mercy and blessings should be invoked.
15. I believe that the practice of deification of man shall continue to be the source of disharmony in matters of God-worship unless it is stopped.
16. I believe that to deify any person born of woman or to accept and hallow anyone so deified is conspiracy against social harmony and sinful contempt for the very sanctity of God.
17. I believe that to end deification of man and hang religion directly on God Himself is to end proliferation of religions and religious quarrels and return peace among men.
18. I believe that the Creed of the Godian Religion represents a new religious civilization which needs to be propagated to save human society from total destruction.

## ii. Belief in a Supreme Being

In Traditional Religion, there is belief in a Supreme Being described as creator, eternal, self-subsisting and omniscient.<sup>2</sup> The Supreme Being is called *Chukwu* among the Igbos; *Olodumare* among the Yorubas; *Ubangiji* among the Hausas; *Soko* among the Nupes and Gbaris; *Abasi* among the Efiks and Ibibios, to name but a few. It is the Supreme Spirit who sends and sustains everything – the sun, the rain, the weather, and never does harm to anyone.<sup>3</sup> In bidding a loved one good night, the Yoruba usually adds "*Olorun jiwa o*", which literally means "May the Supreme God wake us up." The Gwari in the Northern part of Nigeria also have a similar good night greeting: "*Sheko gife nyi*," which means, "May God awaken us tomorrow."

Among the Yorubas and some parts of Northern Nigeria, God's transcendence is emphasized, while his immanence is obscured by reason of the socio-political set-up which discourages direct approach of the king by his subjects. The opposite is the case among the Igbos by reason of a lateral, rather than a pyramidal socio-political structure.

The Supreme Being has minor spirits and deities to act as his ministers and as intermediaries for humans. There are also ancestral spirits who keep the link between the spirit world and the physical. There are, finally, evil spirits out to work mischief and harm. Wicked people invoke them to harm their enemies. These mischievous spirits can however be warded off by use of charms and amulets specially rendered potent for the purpose.

In traditional religion the Supreme Being is also regarded as a judge. As judge he is the final disposer of things he controls human destiny, and each will receive from him as he deserves. He punishes people "for any breach of taboo or for ritual offenses, but it is *Olodumare* who judges human character"<sup>4</sup>.

### iii. The Earth-Goddess

The Earth is a mystical power of which everybody stands in awe, because of its prohibitions and its punishments. The earth forbids bloodshed and so is a sanction of solidarity for the community.

Among the Yoruba, the earth had a powerful cult, and was associated with smallpox as its "arm or sanction"<sup>5</sup>. The "small pox juju" was prohibited in Nigeria in 1917, and the cult has gone into retirement only to be seen in villages hidden under other cults.

The earth deity *Ala*, (*Ale* or *Ane*) is the most important public and private divinity of the Igbos of Nigeria. It is more important than any of the sky gods. *Ala* is often seen in the wooden and clay images in which the Igbo people delight. With a child on her knees and sometimes a crescent moon near her she has been "compared to the Egyptian *Isis* with horns, or even with some Italian madonnas"<sup>6</sup>.

*Ala* is the owner of all men and women. She is also responsible for public morality and offenses against the law are crimes against *Ala* who makes the law and by whom oaths are sworn. So she is often called "the unseen president of society".<sup>7</sup> The *Ala* shrine is usually simple: a tree with a pottery dish in which offerings are placed.

### iv. Water Deities

Most communities in Nigeria have cults of rivers and most rivers bear the names of deities. *Njaba*, *Ulasì*, *Uzaku*, *Onuma*, *Onugbo*, *Ngara*, *Mèélèè* are all the names of revered local deities. The Yoruba storm god has rivers for wives, one of whom is the river Niger. The

Yoruba sea-god, *Olokun*, is represented by one of the famous Ife bronzes found many miles inland. The delta areas of Nigeria have elaborate cults to water deities, usually female. The Oguta people refer fondly to *the Lady of the Lake*.

#### v. Cult to the Sun and the Moon

Some of the Igbo people have shrines of the sun, who is the child of the Supreme God. The symbol of the god in a branch of a tree planted outside a dwelling-hut, and sometimes a pottery dish in front of it is said to represent the sun's disk. Some Yoruba mothers bring their children out of the hut a week after birth and "show" the moon to them saying: "Look at the moon, little one, we bless you at the coming of the new moon. When you see the moon you see riches, prosperity and long life."<sup>8</sup> Then they would throw water on the roof and allowed to flow upon the baby.

When an Igbo sees the new moon he says, holding up his hands, "New moon, protect me as the last moon protected me." Some Northern tribes hold a baby up to the rising sun, three times for a boy and four for a girl.

#### vi. Storm Gods

Gods of the storm are divinities in full right in many parts of Nigeria. They have temples, priests and regular worship. The Igbos and Yorubas pay such attention to the storm, lightening, thunder, and thunderbolt. In many places the storm gods have the greatest and most powerful temples, and their priests are recognized as leaders before most others. The kind of awe with which they are held can be appreciated when one thinks of the endemic violent storms which occur in those areas.

The Yoruba god *Shango* the god of lightening and thunder, is worshipped along with his wives, who are notable rivers, and with the rainbow and thunderclap which are his attendants.<sup>9</sup> He is called "Fighter with Stone", or "The Stone-Thrower". In his temples are to be seen stones that are probably ancient instruments. *Shango* is not only a storm god, but also a deified hero, believed to have been the fourth King of Oyo, the ancient Yoruba capital<sup>10</sup>. Most Igbo villages have a shrine of the god of lightening *Amadioha*, associated with retributive justice which no culprit supposedly ever escapes.

#### b. Basic Practices

In Traditional Religion there is a wide range of observances and festivities for a variety of purposes. There are celebrations for every phase of life including birth, naming, initiation, marriage, title-taking, death. There are some annual and seasonal celebrations such as harvest

or the new year, each following its own established pattern with specific fiscal, disciplinary and social demands. Divination, which usually consists in consulting fortune-tellers, is an integral part of Traditional Religion, and through it the will of the deities are ascertained prior to, in the course of, and at the end of any action of any considerable consequence. The time and frequency of consultation depends entirely on the discretion of the individual practitioner.

## 2. Islamic Religion

### a. The Basic Teachings

The five principal elements of Islam as enjoined in the Koran are: (1) Belief in the one God, and in Mohammed as His prophet; (2) Reciting the daily prayers; (3) Giving the legal alms; (4) Observing the fast of Ramadan; (5) Making a pilgrimage to Mecca once during life. The creed *Kelimah* as such does not occur in the Koran; but the first part of it, "there is no god but Allah (or God)", is in the Koran xlviii.29; but the whole often occurs in the Traditions about Mohammed.

### b. Basic Beliefs

#### i. The Supreme God

There is a short passage in the Koran which, in the words of G.T. Bettany, "answers to the Lord's Prayer"<sup>11</sup>: It runs thus:

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. Praise belongs to God, the Lord of the worlds, the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Ruler of the day of judgment. Thee we worship and Thee we ask for aid. Direct us in the right way, the way of those to whom Thou art gracious, not of those Thou art angry with, nor of those who err<sup>12</sup>.

According to the Koran, "Allah is eternal and everlasting, one and indivisible, not endued with form, nor circumscribed by limit or measure; comprehending all things, but comprehended of nothing." Concerning the nature of God it is expressly stated that, "No vision taketh in Him, but He taketh in all vision; He is the subtle, the all-informed. He has created men, in order that they should worship Him."<sup>13</sup> He is represented sometimes as creating both evil and good, and as creating evil spirits and men for hell: "God misleadeth whom He will, and guideth whom He will"<sup>14</sup>.



The Koran represents God as attended by angels, pure beings created from fire, neither eating nor drinking, nor having sexes. They ask forgiveness for the dwellers upon earth. Two angels are assigned to each human being, standing on his right and on his left, and recording all his actions. One angel, Rhazwan (goodwill), presides over paradise, and another, Malik over hell. Several Archangels are named: Gabriel, Michael, Israfil (who is to sound the last trumpet), and Azrael, the Angel of death.

## ii. About Idols

Idols and idolatry form a prominent subject of denunciation in the Koran. Following the destruction of Meccan idols, the nothingness of idols is brought out in iv.51: "Verily God will not forgive the union of other gods with Himself... and he who uniteth gods with God hath devised a great wickedness." Idolaters were then strictly forbidden to enter the sacred temple at Mecca. The forgiveness of idolaters might not be prayed for, even by their kin. In spite of his denunciation of idolatry, Mohammed still retained the Black Stone as an object of reverence, and also several rites, such as the "runnings to and fro," "stonings of pillars," which were connected with previous idolatrous worship.

Ten idols of the ancient Arabs are mentioned in the Koran, viz., Al Jibl and Al-Taghut, Al-Lat, Al-Uzza, Manat, Wadd, Suwa, Yaghus, Yaug, and Nasr. The first two were idols of the Koreish, Al-Lat was the idol at Taī, Al-Uzza was identified with Venus, but was worshipped under animal forms, as the Lion-god (Yaghus), the vulture-god (Nasr), the Horse-god (Yaug). Habbah was a large sacred stone on which camels were sacrificed; and the remarkable Black Stone of Mecca was another object of intense reverence. In the Kaaba at Mecca there were images representing Abraham and Ishmael, each carrying divining arrows in his hand<sup>15</sup>.

## iii. About Jesus

Jesus is variously referred to as a Divine being, but not the Son of God, for "God could not take to Himself a Son." Yet the miraculous conception of Jesus, the annunciation of the Virgin Mary, and the sinlessness of Jesus are taught. Jesus is described as the greatest miracle-worker of all the prophets, and there is an account of his calling a furnished table down from heaven, to become a recurring festival and sign.<sup>16</sup>

## iv. About Heaven and the *Parousia*

The descriptions of the Muslim paradise of heaven are famous for the sensual delights depicted; but they are not so elaborate and sensual in the Koran as in the traditional sayings of

the Prophet. It is commonly said that there are eight different heavens; namely, the Garden of Eternity, the Abode of Peace, the Abode of Rest, the Gardens of Eden, the Gardens of Refuge, the Gardens of Delight, the Gardens of the Most High, and Gardens of Paradise; but they are nowhere mentioned at once, and may be taken as different descriptions of the same place.

The Koran talks of the reward of the just:

Their reward for their patience shall be paradise and silken robes, reclining therein on bridal couches; naught shall they know of the sun or piercing cold; its shades shall close over them, and low shall its fruits hang down; and vessels of silver and goblets like flagons shall be borne round among them. (lxxvi.12).

It also talks of rivers of water that corrupt not; rivers of milk, whose taste changeth not; and rivers of wine, delicious to those who drink it; and rivers of clarified honey...(xlvi.16, 17).

#### **v. About Hell**

Hell is most frequently referred to as "the Fire", also **Gehennum**. It is said to have seven portals and seven divisions: Gehenna, the purgatory for all Muslims (xix.72); Laza, the flaming fire; Hutamah, the raging fire that splits everything to pieces; Sair, the broiling fire; Sagar, the scorching fire; Jahim, the fierce fire; and Hawiyeh, the abyss.

The Koran talks also of the last judgment variously as the day of standing up, of separation, of reckoning, of awakening, of judgment, the encompassing day, and the hour. There are some apocalyptic passages :

Thinketh man that we shall not reunite his bones? Ay, his very finger tips are we able evenly to replace... When the eye shall be dazzled, when the moon shall be darkened, and the sun and the moon shall be together, On that day man shall cry, Where is there a place to flee to? But in vain; there is no refuge: with thy Lord on that day shall be the sole asylum. On that day shall man be told of all that he hath done first and last: yea, a man shall be the eye-witness against himself. (lxxv).

#### **vi. On Predestination**

Predestination is one of the primary teachings of the Koran -- that nothing can happen to us but what God has fixed. God misleads whom he will. None can die except by His

decree. Many are decreed to err and to enter hell. These doctrines have led to a paralysing fatalism among Muslims.

### c. Basic Practices

#### i. Prayer

Prayer is often enjoined in the Koran, but the five daily prayer-times are not mentioned in any one passage. It simply said: "Glorify God when it is evening, and at morning, -- and to Him be praise in the heavens and earth, -- and at afternoon and at noontide."

#### ii. The Holy Pilgrimage

The holy pilgrimage or *Hajj* to Mecca is thus commanded:

Proclaim to the peoples a pilgrimage. Let them come to thee on the foot and on every fleet camel, arriving by every deep defile. that they may bear witness of its benefits to them, and make mention of God's name on the appointed days over the brute beasts with which He hath supplied them for sustenance: and let them pay their vows and circuit the ancient house. xxii.28.

## 3. The Christian Religion

### a. Basic Beliefs

A summary of the Christian belief is found in the creed, which is the Christian declaration of faith. A number of versions exist, like the Apostles' creed and the Athanasian creed, but the Nicene creed seems to create the fewest problems for most Christians of all denominations:

#### i. The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father.  
Through him all things were made.  
For us men and for our salvation

he came down from heaven:  
by the power of the Holy Spirit  
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,  
and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in Glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the father and the Son.  
With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified.  
He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

## **ii. Belief Centred on the Life and Teaching of Christ**

The Christian religion is centred on the person, teaching and ministry of Jesus Christ of the New Testament, whom Christians believe is God's only-begotten Son, true God and true human, co-equal with God, and coming down to earth in human form to save human kind from sin. At the end of his ministry on earth he commissioned his followers, the Church, to continue his work on earth leaving them specific instructions on certain areas of conduct.

Most founders of religions before Christ came belonged rather to the upper or dominant classes. Otherwise they would have had no possibility influencing people to become their followers. Jesus was born into a lowly background, came from no important centre, had not studied under any notable teacher, and was a mere artisan --- following one of the occupations demanding minimum skill in a small town. His coming forward to teach in itself constituted a most striking innovation, and could only have been possible if, as was the case, he had something special to offer by way of innovative teaching and miracles.

### **b. The Teachings of Christ**

Attempts have been made, often successfully, to establish some parallels between the teachings of Jesus and those of great teachers of earlier times like Socrates, Confucius or the Buddha. The originality of his teachings lies not so much in saying what no one else had ever

said as in making them come so much alive as to seem to have been specially designed for the moment and circumstance in which they were uttered. Christ was also original in his character and mode of life which were in perfect consonance with his teaching.

### **i. The Fatherhood of God**

Unique also to the Christian religion is Jesus' teaching on the Fatherhood of God and the common brotherhood of all humankind, (cf. St John 20:17, 21). (Judaism teaches God's Fatherhood, but not to include all humankind). Jesus pictured God as the Father -- unseen, (cf. St John 5:37), yet ever watching the actions of His children, considering, not the outward act only, but the inward motive, the strength of effort, the difficulties overcome by each one.

### **ii. Future Life**

In another direction Jesus exalted greatly the ideal of the supreme Being by his teaching about immortality and the dispensation of future happiness and punishment. He largely dwarfed the predominant influence of events in this life, whether favourable or painful, by bringing into prominence the future judgment and redress of temporal inequalities (Lk 6:24-26). The belief that a future judgment is to take place, at which the condition of humankind will be determined according to conduct in this life, has undoubtedly exercised an enormous influence, both in producing converts to Christianity and in elevating their moral tone.

### **iii. Faith Required For Special Divine Favours**

It may be said that faith was not a teaching of Jesus by which he was distinguished from many other religious teachers; for they have required their pupils to believe in their teaching and doctrines, and to practise them. But in one respect his teaching about faith had a peculiarity. He impressed on his hearers and those who petitioned certain spiritual favours or cures that salvation, forgiveness, healing, or the special boon needed could be obtained by faith without special works in most cases.

### **iv. Salvation from Sin**

Part of the mission Jesus came into the world to accomplish was to relieve suffering humanity from physical, mental and psychological diseases. He said of himself: "I came that they may have life, and have it to the fullest (St John 10:10). He accomplished this goal through his healing ministry. His deep impulse and desire to deliver humans from the evils which degraded their conduct and thought, was ever prominent. By a multitude of methods he sought to make humans realise their state of alienation from God, their need of reconciliation,

purification, and forgiveness. The realisation of the truth about themselves was the first step to rectification. Often it was accomplished by a very short interview, almost by a look on the pure face which by contrast revealed the impurity elsewhere. Then he would often say: "Your sins are forgiven." When at the end he was crucified and died, his death is believed as the culmination of his mission of salvation of humankind from sin.

### **c. Christian Practices and Observances**

In Christianity the day of the resurrection is kept free from menial engagements except in emergencies. Most Christians observe Sunday as the day of rest, but there are some who, basing their arguments on the Decalogue as found in the Book of Exodus, think the observance should be the Sabbath and not the Sunday. Other Christian feasts include Christmas which commemorates the birth of Jesus on December 25; Good Friday, which commemorates his passion and death; Easter, which commemorates his resurrection; Ascension which marks his return to heaven after his resurrection; and Pentecost, which is the fulfilment of his promise to send the Holy Spirit on believers after his Ascension.

#### **i. Christian Pilgrimage**

Christians have the practice of going on pilgrimage to any of the places connected with the life and ministry of Christ on earth especially Jerusalem and other parts of Palestine, Rome, which is the seat of the Catholic Church.

In addition, Christians have the practice of prayer, fasting and almsgiving, especially during the periods of Lent during which they commemorate the suffering and death of Jesus. There is also the practice of confession of sins to God in order to obtain purification. While in the Catholic Church and some parts of the Anglican Communion the priest hears the confession of penitents and pronounces absolution as Christ's minister and representative, other Christian denominations have the practice of direct confession to God for the sake of forgiveness of sins.

#### **ii. The Sacraments**

The Christian daily life is sustained by the sacraments which are signs of inward grace which are believed to have been instituted by Jesus as a means of sanctification for those who apply them. Opinions are divided among the different denominations as to the number of the sacraments. Some acknowledge as few as three, others as many as nine. Baptism, confirmation, and the Eucharist seem to be acknowledged by most Christian denominations as sacraments.

The most important Christian symbol is the cross, which is the instrument on which the Saviour was crucified. It is an object of great reverence among Christians and some groups

make it the focal point in their place of worship and some ornaments are fashioned in the form of the cross so that wearers can be identified with it more frequently in their daily wear.

#### 4. A General Scheme Incorporating Material from the Three Religions

A scheme for a more detailed study of the three religions can be given in the following outline which contains other details not directly connected with moral education. The aspects of structure and specific religious practices have not appeared in the quick description above, but are here included to enable the students or teachers expand their knowledge if and when they so desire. The outline, which is divided into four sections offers at a glance a view of each religious tradition:

##### *a. General Introduction*

- i) The concept of God and the supernatural in general, in Christianity, Islam, and Traditional Religion.
- ii) The concept of the world and man's place in it.
- iii) The meaning of the good life, of sin, suffering and happiness.
- iv) Elements of worship, prayer, sacrifice, salvation.
- v) Inspiration.
- vi) Biblical and non-biblical Religion.

##### *b. Traditional Religion*

- i) Traditional cosmogony: God, man, sky, sea, earth, minor deities, ancestors.
- ii) Concept of the good life: *òfó na ógù* (principle), justice, probity of life, sanctity of life, sense of the sacred.
- iii) Sense of the Holy: Taboos, Totem animals, sacred periods.
- iv) Sacred symbols: *Òfó* (object), *ikéngà*, *umune*, *chi*.
- v) Elements of Worship and Sacrifice: priesthood, divination, sacred observances.
- vi) Concept of Family and Society: the Ancestors as Living-Dead.

##### *c. Islam*

- i) Strict Monotheism: Dislike for images and representations of the deity.
- ii) Rejection of concept of God as Father, God of justice more than of Mercy, Rejection of the Trinity.

- iii) Common Heritage with Christianity.
- iv) Prophet Mohammed as God's special Messenger, Koran received directly from God.
- v) Jesus, prophet not saviour, not divine, not "Son of God".
- vi) The Good life as strict obedience to divine injunctions in the Koran.
- vii) Islamic Piety: *The Hajj*, the Ramadan fast, Islamic Holy Places at Mecca and Medina.

**d. Christianity**

- i) Judaism, a common ancestor to Christianity and Islam.
- ii) The Hebrew Bible as common source book.
- iii) God of Justice is also God of love and mercy.
- iv) The Triune God, the Incarnation and Salvation through Christ.
- v) The Schisms, Reformation and after.
- vi) Protestantism: authority based on the Bible alone.
- vii) The Church, the Pope as Visible Head (rejected by Protestants).
- viii) Christian Moral Life: the Decalogue, the Beatitudes.
- ix) The Sacramental life.

In addition, the possibility of religious practice must be encouraged for it offers the students the opportunity not only to grow in the religion in which they were brought up, but also to interact ecumenically with people of other faiths.



## Notes

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3. Arinze, Francis, Sacrifice in Ibo Religion, Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1970, p.10.
4. Idowu, Bolaji, Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief, London: Longmans Green and Co. Ltd, 1986, p.42.
5. Parrinder, Edward Geoffrey, African Traditional Religion, Westport Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1976, p.47.
6. op. cit. p.49.
7. ibid.
8. ibid. p.45.
9. ibid. p.47.
10. ibid.
11. Bettany, G.T., "The Koran and its Teachings", Encyclopedia of World Religions, New York: Dorset Press, 1988, p.527.
12. ibid. p.528.
13. The Koran vi. 101.
14. The Koran xxxv.9.
15. See Bettany, G.T., Encyclopedia of World Religions, New York: Dorset Press, 1988, p.502.
16. ibid. p.531.

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